Saving the Special Places…

An Assessment of Need

For the

Forest Legacy Program

In Idaho

Prepared for the

Office of the Governor
And the
Idaho Department of Lands

By the

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For
The Forest Legacy Program in Idaho

"The Forest Legacy Program (FLP), a federal program in partnership with states, supports state efforts to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands. Designed to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands, FLP is an entirely voluntary program. To maximize the public benefits it achieves, the program focuses on the acquisition of partial interests in privately owned forest lands… It encourages and supports acquisition of conservation easements, legally binding agreements transferring a negotiated set of property rights from one party to another, without removing the property from private ownership. Most FLP conservation easements restrict development, require sustainable forestry practices, and protect other values.

From the Forest Service's "Forest Legacy" website

Introduction

Idaho is the 14th largest state of the United States and certainly one of the most varied, encompassing a land area of 82,750 square miles and a water area of 823 square miles. Elevations range from 733 feet above sea level at Lewiston, on the Snake River in north central Idaho, to it's highest elevation of 12,662 feet at Mt. Borah located in the Lost River Mountain Range in the south central part of the state. In length, Idaho extends from the United States border with Canada in the North to the Nevada/Utah border 479 miles to the South. It borders the states of Oregon and Washington on the west and Montana and Wyoming on the east.

Idaho has three major land regions, (1) the Rocky Mountains, (2) the Columbia Plateau and (3) the Basin and Range region. The Rocky Mountain Region is the largest, extending from the "Panhandle" (the northern tip of Idaho between Washington and Montana) through the center of the state ending on the Wyoming border's juncture with Utah. The Columbia Plateau covers much of Idaho's western border beginning in the Panhandle on the north following the Snake River south and eastward across Snake River Plain. The Basin and Range Region is located in southeastern Idaho adjoining the Utah border.

All four of the world's major biomes are represented in Idaho—arctic alpine, desert, grassland and forest. Average precipitation varies from as much as 80 inches in the mountains of the panhandle to under 8 inches in the deserts of southern Idaho. Statewide, average annual moisture is 16 inches with much of the precipitation in the form of snow. Idaho's average annual temperature is 46 degrees F. but temperatures vary greatly with the elevation. Most of Idaho has a milder climate than the Great Plains states in the same latitude. The Pacific Ocean brings warm sea air to the state, while the high mountains of eastern Idaho offers protection from the cold blasts from Canada and the Great Plains during the winter.

With the exception of the Northern Panhandle, the 1,038 mile long Snake River dominates much of Idaho's geography, economy and biology. The Snake River flows into the state from its source near Yellowstone Park in Wyoming. It crosses the Columbian Plateau region of

southern Idaho, providing water for the state's rich irrigated agricultural industry. It then turns northward providing about a third of the state's western border before leaving the state at Lewiston.

According to the latest survey of the state by the Forest Service, of Idaho's 53.5 million acres, about 22.3 million acres, or 42 percent are forested to some degree. Of this amount, 21.4 million acres, which are stocked with at least 10 percent commercial species, are classified by the Forest Service as "timberland". The remaining forests, 0.9 million acres, lack sufficient stocking to be included in this category and are classified as "woodland".

Federal legislation has reserved a total of 4.3 million acres, or 8 percent of the land area of Idaho for national parks, and monuments, wilderness, and other purposes that preclude most commercial uses of that land. Designated "wilderness", for example, precludes not only logging but also all motorized vehicles and accounts for 93 percent of the Federal reserved land. These reserved lands include 3.8 million acres of timberland, or 18 percent of Idaho's timberland.

Of the remaining 17.6 million acres of Idaho's timberland, nearly 12.8 million acres, or 73 percent is under National Forest Service management, contributing to a federal ownership in the state that exceeds two-thirds of the state's total land mass. Of the remaining 27 percent, 1.5 million acres is managed by the State of Idaho and other public agencies, leaving 3.2 million acres in private ownership1.

Historical Background of Idaho's Forest Products Industry

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Idaho forest products industry emerged as a major economic force in the state. The industry originally was built on two species—western white and Ponderosa pine. The principle centers of development were in the Panhandle region and west central region of the state. Some of the largest pine sawmills in the country were constructed, which promoted the growth of communities such as; Bonner's Ferry, St Maries, Coeur d'Alene, Lewiston and McCall. Sawmills proliferated throughout the timbered areas of the state, and were common in almost every small community that had access to timber.

As the forest products industry matured and as raw material availability and markets grew, the economies of many local communities became increasingly dependent on the industry. By the middle of the century the industry had reached it's peak. While timber came from a combination of sources, many mill communities were almost exclusively dependent on timber from the public lands, although some of the larger timber companies—Boise Cascade, Potlatch, Plum Creek (originally an offspring of the Northern Pacific Railroad), owned enough timberland to be relatively self-sufficient. But for the smaller, often family owned companies, state and federally managed timberlands were (and remain) extremely important.

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1 Throughout this assessment, the reader may note some differences in acreages reported for private ownerships. This is largely due to the differences in definitions in "timberland", "woodlands" and "forest lands" by different agencies when the data was collected and reported.

By the mid point of the twentieth century the forest products industry was considered second in economic importance to the state, with only agriculture exceeding it. However, passage of federal legislation regarding forest management, endangered species protection and water quality seemed to reflect an increasing national desire to limit the amount of timber harvested from federal lands, and, beginning in the late 1980's national forest timber sales began a steep decline. Without that timber, it became increasingly difficult to sustain the vitality of the forest products industry in the state, and a number of mills dependent on Federal lands for timber were gradually forced to close down. The survivors were limited to those who either owned or had access to state or private sources of timber.

Many of Idaho's former timber-dependent communities now found themselves desperately trying to find ways to replace the economic benefits lost due to the demise of the timber industry. Often, the options are limited. The greatest advantage most of these communities have is the natural environment of the forested areas in which they are located. Many communities are attempting a transition to a tourist-based economy, using forest recreation, hunting and fishing to replace the lost timber jobs, with varying degrees of success.

Demographic and Population Changes

Idaho has experienced one of the fastest population growth rates in the country during the past decade, but that growth has been unevenly distributed in the state. The population increases have been almost exclusively been centered in urban areas, such as Boise and its environs or in areas of high tourism, including the Sun Valley/Ketchum and Coeur d'Alene. For the most part rural counties dependent on natural resource based industry or agriculture have not shared in that growth, with a few actually declining in population. The U.S. Census indicates that the urban population of Idaho has grown from 40% at mid-twentieth century to about 60% today.

This pattern of population growth coupled with an increase in part time residents in the state is resulting in increased pressure on forestland and other lands of scenic beauty to be developed for residential or recreational use. Private forestland represents a limited part of the state's land area and in many cases includes some the most desirable sites for development. The type of development will determine the future use of this class of land, but most development forever alters the ability of the land to be managed for continuous harvests of timber and for the wildlife or watershed values generally associated with those lands.

All this means that changes in the traditional life style and employment of the current residents of Idaho will be inevitable as will be changes in land uses and management. As residences and recreational homes are built on small forest acreages, protection from fire and insect will become more difficult. Traditional forest management will decline and pre-commercial and commercial harvesting will be restricted. Equally important, public access to private lands will become more limited. Open public access to private forestland, particularly industrial lands, has been a tradition in Idaho. Hunters, fishers, and recreationists of all sorts, have relied on public access to enjoy their various pleasures.

These changes and the challenges as well as the opportunities they present are not lost on Idaho's private forest landowners. As Idaho's forest products industry continues to decline as a part of the state's economy, private forest landowners are faced with increasing pressure to seek and maintain acceptable returns from their timberlands. Those owning forestlands with higher value for residential, scenic, or recreational use perceive development opportunities

that far outstrip the economic rewards of managing their lands for the long term production of timber.

Potlatch Corporation and Boise Cascade, for example, are two of Idaho's largest private timberland owners. Both hold lands with high values for development as well as timberlands with areas of prime habitat for big game and high quality watersheds. Both are also a large integrated forest products companies that have historically managed their lands for long-term production of timber, and remains committed to maintaining their "working" forests. However, Boise Cascade has now closed all its mills in Idaho and neither company can justifiably ignore the economic opportunities posed by the value that some of their lands have for development.

Throughout Idaho's timbered areas, the threat to traditional life styles and livelihoods is palpable. Jobs as loggers or sawmill workers, which at one time would support a family with a comfortable income, are increasingly scarce. While many, perhaps most, of the economic and demographic changes that are reducing the importance of Idaho's forest product industry are likely inevitable, there is some ability to protect the remaining private land base upon which not only the timber industry relies upon, but also wildlife and recreationists which also rely upon these same lands. The Forest Legacy Program will provide Idaho an added and valuable tool for motivating the private forestland owners of the state to help protect the values and benefits that society derives from forested lands.

Idaho's Forest and Woodland Resources

(Ed. note: Much of the following discussion on Idaho's forests, timber growth and other characteristics has been excerpted from "Idaho's Forests, 1991", by Forest Service researchers Mark Brown and David Chojnacky. This is the survey of Idaho's forests, completed for every state on a recurring cycle. Idaho's most recent survey was done in 1991. While this makes this data a bit dated, it is the best available. The Forest Service is in the process of revising Idaho's forest survey.)

With a wide variety of topography and climate, Idaho's forests are predictably ecologically diverse. Climatic patterns, aspect and elevation govern the occurrence and distribution of forest types in Idaho, and natural events such as catastrophic fire and severe weather, as well as human-induced logging and grazing, have influenced the succession and development of forest areas. In general, based upon the level of available moisture, "forests" as perhaps most people think of them occupy the northern two-thirds of the state.

The Snake River plains, and the high desert of southern Idaho, are for the most part non-forested with commercial tree species. However, portions of these lands include species that, while perhaps not commercially valuable, are very important for wildlife habitat and scenic values. These include such tree species as aspen, pinion pines or junipers, as well as scattered stands of Douglas-fir, lodgepole or subalpine fir in the higher elevations and on the moister sites. For the purposes of the Forest Legacy Assessment of Need, the State Forest Stewardship Committee has chosen to include in the program those lands with the vegetative types illustrated in Figure 1.

Idaho's timberlands can be classified by "forest types". Forest type classifications are determined by species composition and are convenient descriptors of forest areas. Some types represent largely pure stands of a single species. More often, however, types are composed of several species and named for one representing a plurality of the stocking.

According to the forest survey, the Douglas-fir type covers the largest area of Idaho's timberland with 6.1 million acres, or 35 percent. Second is lodgepole pine with 2.5 million acres, or 14 percent. Next in abundance is true spruce-fir, a combination of Englemann spruce and Subalpine fir, with 2.4 million acres. Grand fir accounts for 2.2 million acres and Ponderosa pine type with 1.5 million acres. Except for the timberland shifted into reserve status over the past four decades, the area of timberland in Idaho has changed relatively little. However, changes in land management, past timber harvest practices and fire management have all altered the forest type composition of Idaho. For example, high-value species such as white pine and Ponderosa pine are highly sought after and logging has greatly reduced the area they once occupied. In addition, white pine blister rust and outbreaks of mountain pine beetle have taken their toll on pine species as well, reducing their presence in the forest. (Idaho's Forest Inventory, 1991)

Figure 1. forest and Woodland Types
Eligible for the Legacy Program

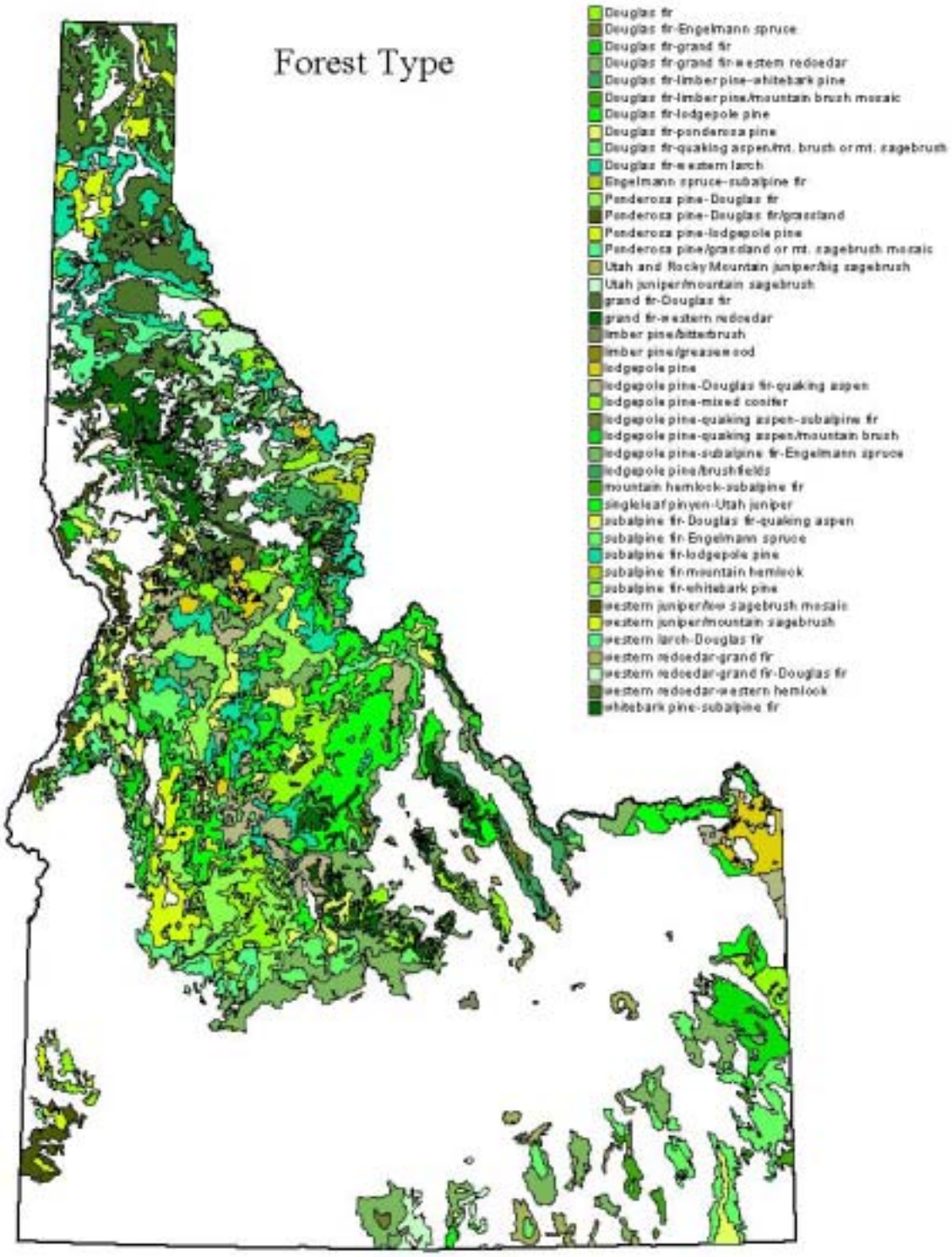


Figure 2. Area of Non-Reserved Timberlands by Forest Type and Ownership, 1991

Source: USDA, Forest Service

Timber Productivity

While "productivity" is a rather subjective term, for timber, the product is generally measured as the potential timber yield capability of the forest, generally measured in cubic feet per acre per year. Based on timber growth, in Idaho there are more than 3 million acres of highly productive timberlands, those producing at least 120 cubic feet per acre per year. More than half of these are national forest lands. Idaho timberlands, especially those in northern part of the state, are among the most productive in the nation. Only five southern states and three western states (California, Oregon and Washington) have more acres of high productivity lands than does Idaho.

Table 1. Idaho Timberland Area by Productivity Class and Ownership, 1991

	Ownership group				
	National forest	Other public	Forest industry	Other private	All ownerships
Productivity class (cu.ft./acre/year)	*1,000 acres*				
225+	8.9	0	7.1	0	16.0
165-224	227.4	78.5	83.6	97.0	486.5
120-164	1,535.0	298.8	280.6	416.2	2,530.6
85-119	3,230.0	538.0	555.3	655.6	4,978.9
50-84	4,065.0	394.5	291.8	674.1	5,425.4
20-49	3,395.8	213.9	20.9	162.7	3,793.3
0-19	346.4	13.4	0.0	22.7	382.5

Source: Brown and Chojnacky (1996).

The age of trees is a key characteristic of forests. The issue of "old growth " and "ancient forests" imply a relationship to forest age. However, usually it is the increased size of trees and structure of the forests resulting from age that contributes to "old growth values", as opposed to age, per se. Large trees and complex structure are important habitat attributes for some wildlife species. Age may also play an important part in the psychological and cultural significance people attach to forests. From a timber growing prospective, age is important because older trees grow more slowly and become more susceptible to mortality from disease and insects, so the risks of retaining timber generally increases with age, although economic values can, as well.

Almost half of Idaho's timberlands are in the over 80 years age class and another quarter are between 60 and 80 years of age. Age distribution is not even across ownerships. Over half of national forests timberlands are over 80 years old, but only 36% of forest industry lands and 25% of other private lands have attained that age. Forest industry has a greater percentage (17%) of timberlands in the 1-10 year old age stands than the other ownership categories, reflecting differing management objectives, including that of harvesting old, slower growing stands and replacing them with young trees that will grow rapidly.

Table 2. Idaho Timberland Area by Age Class, 1991

Age class	Ownership group				All ownerships
	National forest	Other public	Forest industry	Other private	
years	*1,000 acres*				
1-10	929.8	131.5	226.5	123.2	1,411.0
21-30	272.5	50.5	38.4	66.8	428.2
31-40	324.2	59.8	76.0	106.2	566.1
41-50	802.8	86.6	70.4	246.0	1,205.8
51-60	1,124.2	174.1	111.5	207.0	1,616.8
61-70	1,198.8	179.8	153.0	393.3	1,925.0
71-80	1,474.5	192.9	148.0	308.9	2,124.3
more than 80	6,335.3	671.6	459.9	486.9	7,953.7
Total	12,462.1	1,546.7	1,283.7	1,938.3	17,230.9

Source: Forest Inventory and Analysis (1997).

Numerous factors including tree species and site conditions determine how fast and large trees may grow. From a wood products perspective, the diameter of trees is important because harvesting and manufacturing costs and potential end-use products and values all vary by the size of trees being removed from the forest. Larger trees result in lower harvesting costs per unit of wood and produce more valuable products. Large trees also provide habitat for some kinds of wildlife and contribute to the beauty of the forest.

On all Idaho timberlands, 62% of trees are 1-5 inches in diameter-at-breast-height; only 4 percent are 15 inches or greater. Few differences exist in the percentages of number of trees in each diameter class by ownership.

Like age class, diameter class does not tell us much about how trees are arranged in the forest. Is a particular forest made up only of one size tree or a variety of sizes? Although not a precise measure, stand-size class is an expression of the size of trees within a particular forest tract. On Idaho timberlands, 70% of the acres are in the sawtimber stand size class, with each ownership having from 59% to 72% in acres of sawtimber. Other size classes are less evenly distributed. The forest industry has a lower percentage of nonstocked acreage, a large percentage in seeding and sapling, and much less in poletimber than the other ownerships.

Table 3. Number of Live Trees on Idaho's Timberland By Diameter Class, 1991

Diameter class	Ownership group				All ownerships
	National forest	Other public	Forest industry	Other private	
inches at breast height	*million trees*				
1.0-4.9	2,941.2	379.1	464.1	396.0	4,180.5
5.0-8.9	1,091.1	113.0	98.7	152.3	1,455.2
9.0-14.9	594.7	65.7	55.7	79.2	795.4
15.0-20.9	154.7	20.4	14.4	18.8	208.3
21.0-28.9	53.7	6.2	3.7	4.2	67.7
29.0 and over	15.7	1.7	0.5	0.5	18.4
All	4,851.2	586.0	637.2	651.0	6,725.4

Source: Forest Inventory and Analysis (1997).

Table 4. Idaho Timberland Area by Stand-size, 1991

Stand-size class	Ownership group				All ownerships
	National forest	Other public	Forest industry	Other private	
	1,000 acres				
Sawtimber	9,300.0	1,046.8	788.8	1,200.3	12,335.9
Poletimber	1,732.7	171.1	70.1	304.6	2,278.5
Sapling &seedling	1,019.3	212.2	338.1	331.5	1,901.1
Nonstocked	756.5	107.0	42.4	191.9	1,097.8

Source: Brown and Chojnacky (1996).

Wildlife Values

Perhaps the biggest challenge in describing Idaho's wildlife values is deciding where to begin. For the sportsmen, trophy bull elk, game birds of many species, deer or waterfowl come to mind. These animals not only add excitement for all who travel to Idaho's woodlands, they significantly add to the state's economy through tourism revenues. However, just as significant are those animals that present few hunting opportunities, including moose, numerous songbirds, hares, various reptiles and vertebrate species too numerous to mention, but all deserving of their place in Idaho's forest and woodlands. Finally, Idaho is the home of 23 plant and animal species that are so rare they are listed as "threatened" or "endangered" under the federal Endangered Species Act, as well as 6 candidates for such listings *(Appendix III)*. These include such grand creatures as wolves, grizzly bears and woodland caribou.

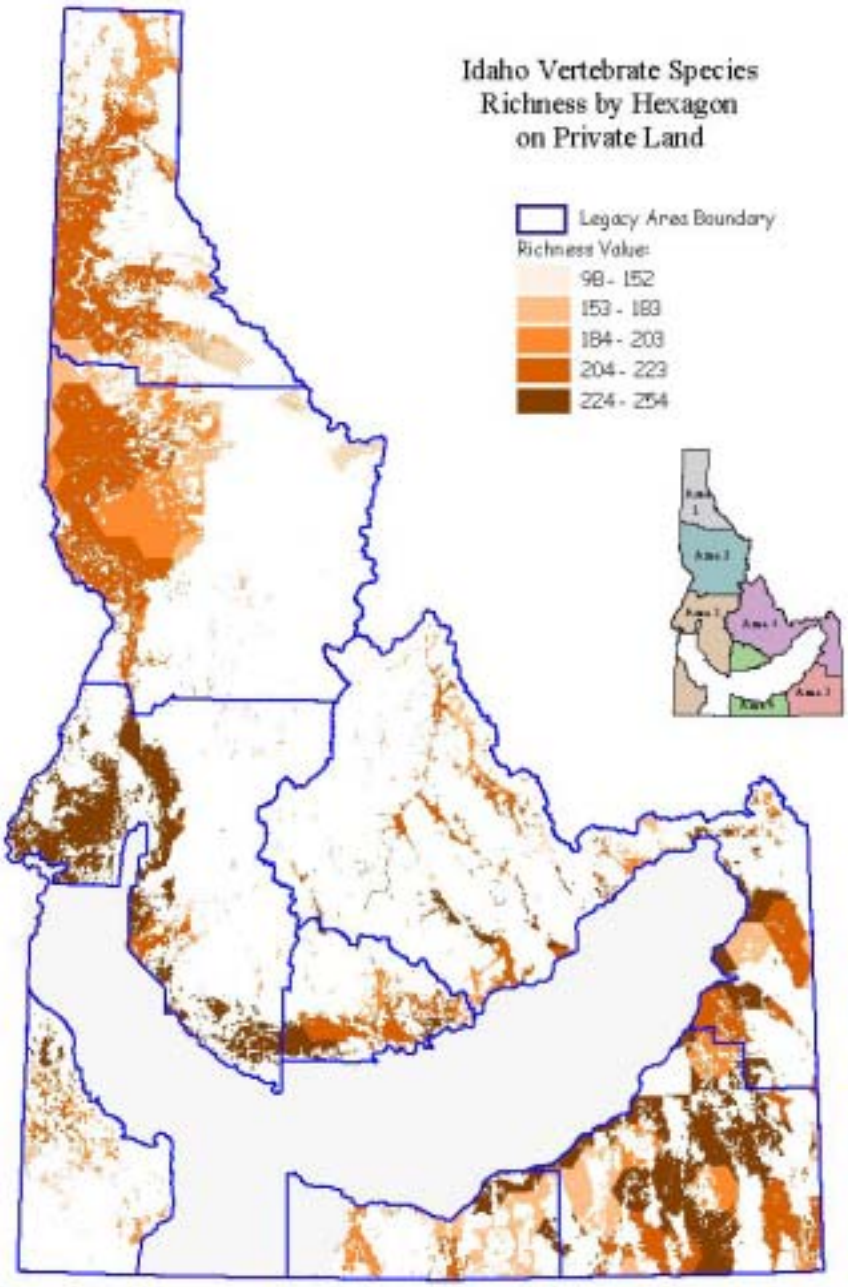
There is probably little point in attempting a definitive discussion of all the species of wildlife associated with Idaho's privately owned forests and woodlands and the values they represent for the purposes of this Assessment. Any such effort beyond noting the number of species and that they each have a value and a place would inevitably fall short. In lieu of that attempt, the committee notes, however, the recent work of the Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit's "Landscape Dynamics Lab" in Moscow. Scientists there have completed some work that allows an easy, yet comprehensive, look at the relationship between wildlife species and land ownership.

Through the Idaho "Gap Analysis Project", scientists modeled vegetation cover and wildlife habitat for 317 vertebrate species native to Idaho to calculate "species richness" for given areas of land across the state. The result is "Geographical Information System" (GIS) data for the state that displays the number of species projected to be found in any area. As such, this data represents a measure of biological diversity across Idaho's landscapes and can be combined with other data to illustrate species richness across various landscapes, including privately owned forestlands. The results of this work are summarized in Figure 4 and in Appendix III for each Legacy Area.

One aspect of the impact of private land ownership and how these lands are used on wildlife bears special mention, for it highlights a critical objective of the Forest Legacy Program in Idaho. Throughout Idaho, one of major values to be protected and carefully managed is big game winter range. According to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, big game winter range is the variable in wildlife management that is in the shortest supply, at the greatest risk and has the greatest impact on wildlife numbers. Winter range is generally the lands between the lowland agricultural areas and the upland timbered areas that are often in public ownership.

Often the most valuable areas from a wildlife standpoint are on south-facing slopes and have either scattered trees or "stringers" of timber in the draws. These lands are frequently in private ownership, but, as noted previously, they are in short supply. Such characteristics that make these sites important big game winter range also make them attractive to recreational or residential developments. However, the combination of fences, roads, dogs, shrubbery and people associated with development make wildlife conflicts inevitable, and, invariably negative for the animals.

Figure 3. Species Richness on Private Lands in Idaho



Geology and Minerals

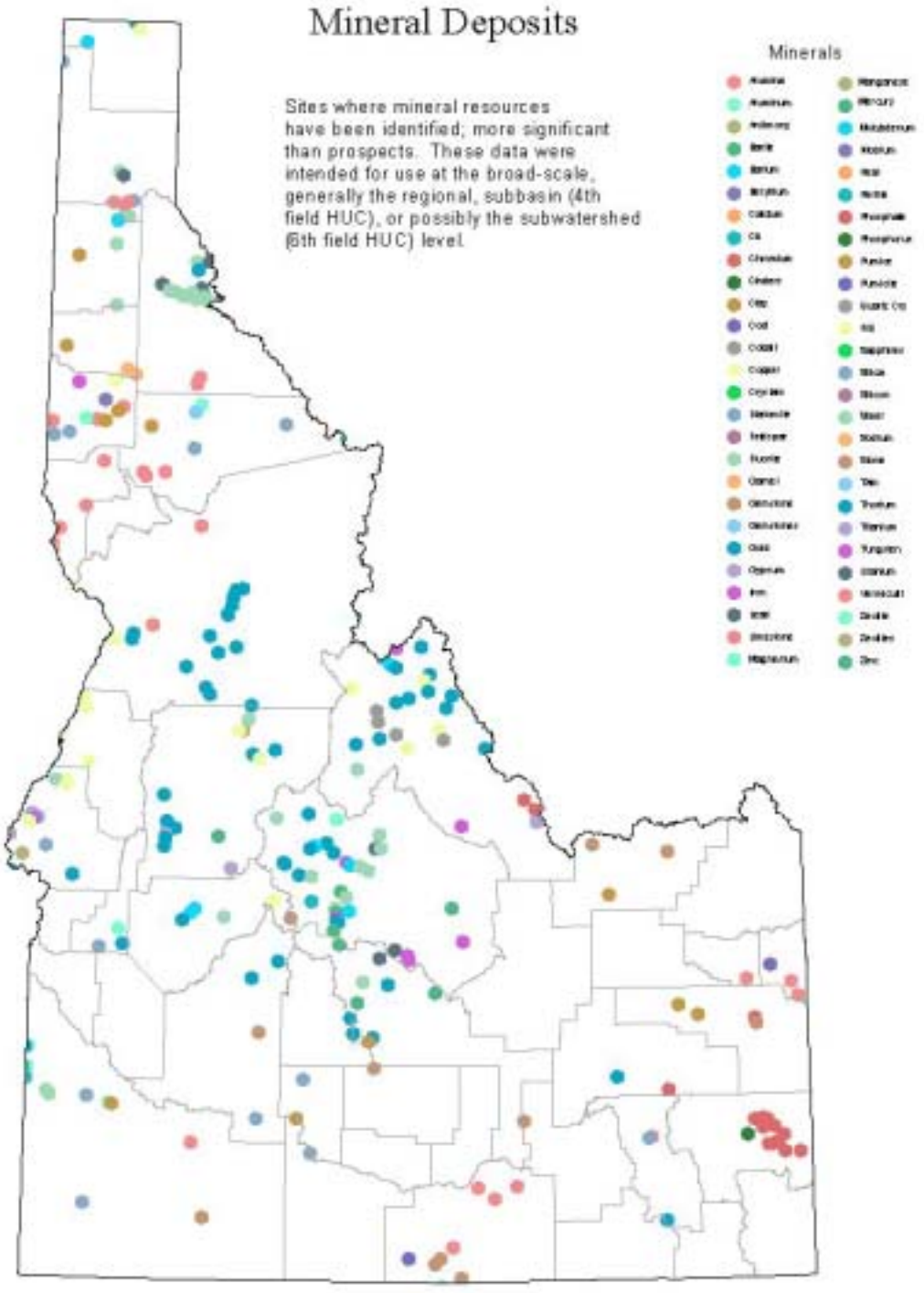
In the fall of 1860, a prospecting party led by Captain E. D. Pierce discovered gold in Canal Gulch, a stream located near the present city of Pierce in Clearwater County. A major migration immediately began which spawned the settlement at Lewiston. The migration continued to spread southward to create more settlements at Boise and in the central and southwestern part of the state. Later in 1881 a new gold discovery made by Andrew Prichard along the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River, resulted in the development of the Silver Valley of north Idaho. Thus, mining became the state's first industry and the early development of the state and the settlement of most of its communities were the result of the Pierce discovery.

Idaho provides the nation with the widest array of minerals of any state, including gold in central and southern Idaho, silver in the north and southwest, lead and zinc in the north, molybdenum in central Idaho and phosphate in southeast Idaho. Much of these mineral resources either has been or is being mined. While mining generally takes place in remote locations, its impact is felt throughout the state. Idaho's mining industry directly employs 5000 with an annual payroll of over $200 million. While "hard rock" mining in particular (gold, silver, lead, zinc) has declined in recent years, mining and mineral production continue to play an important role in Idaho's modern economy (Table 5).

Table 5. Idaho Mineral Production (Millions of Dollars)

	1992	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**Total**
Phosphate	$547	$568	$630	$569	$577	$2,891
Gold	35	41	39	115	135	365
Molybdenum	29	0	45	80	48	202
Silver	32	26	23	31	40	152
Lead, Zinc, Copper	18	16	12	14	19	79
Other	112	127	131	283	63	716
Total	**$773**	**$778**	**$880**	**$1,092**	**$882**	**$4,405**

Figure 4. Known Mineral Deposits in Idaho



Watersheds and Fish

Like wildlife, the value and variety of Idaho's watersheds defy a simple and concise description. The state is blessed with close to 100,000 miles of rivers and streams, as well as over 2,000 major natural lakes. Each supports hundreds of native aquatic species, ranging from small and very rare invertebrate species to Chinook salmon. It is probably the salmonid family that captures the most attention in the state—all species that require cold and clean water. Originally, most of the state's major watersheds served as spawning and rearing areas for anadromous species—salmon and steelhead trout—that spent a part of their life cycle in the Pacific Ocean. Other streams, where access to the ocean was cut off by barrier falls, held various native trout species, most notably cutthroat, rainbow and bull trout.

Despite a century and a half of civilization and the construction of numerous dams on the rivers leading to the sea, Idaho remains the home of salmon and steelhead, both of which can be seen spawning in streams tributary to the Salmon or Clearwater Rivers just as they have for eons. Both species can be caught, as well, and thousands come to the state each year for that purpose, in addition to those who fish for cutthroat, rainbow or introduced valuable game fish species throughout the state's waters.

Perhaps the most comprehensive discussion of Idaho's watersheds and the fish that inhabit them is found in the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Plan draft Environmental Impact Statement. In assessing the condition of watersheds in the Columbia Basin for that effort, the federal scientists completing the study had four objectives: (1) broadly characterize the geophysical and biological settings that define the natural ability of each watershed to support aquatic life, (2) identify the factors that affect aquatic habitats, (3) complete an assessment of current conditions for each watershed, and, (4) synthesize each of the above into a regional context from which managers could develop strategies for managing the regions watersheds *(ICBEMP EIS supporting documents)*. Their findings are summarized in Figure 6 and in the following descriptions of the watersheds depicted on the map *(Note: The following descriptions and map do not include the Bear River/Bear Lake watershed, since it is not tributary to the Columbia River and therefore not included in the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Plan).*

Assemblage A-These watersheds are found primarily in the Northern Glaciated Mountains, the Lower Clark Fork and Upper Clark Fork, outside the range of anadromous fishes. The watersheds generally contain a high number of fish species, many of them non-native. Species composition consistently includes fish with a wide range of temperature tolerances, suggesting a mix of larger rivers and reservoirs with smaller, cold-water streams.

Assemblage B-These watersheds are found primarily in the Columbia Plateau, Blue Mountains, and Northern Glaciated Mountains, within the range of anadromous fish. The watersheds display the highest taxa diversity and evenness and generally contain many species-many of which are non-native. Dominant species include anadromous steelhead and Chinook salmon, several warm-water game fish, and carp, suggesting that these are larger rivers, and perhaps migration corridors for anadromous fish.

Assemblage C -These watersheds are scattered throughout the Basin, but are most common in the Columbia Plateau, Northern Glaciated Mountains, and the Owyhee Uplands generally outside the range of anadromous fish. The watersheds include the highest total taxa and show high taxa diversity, yet have only one dominant species (introduced rainbow trout) and relatively few dominant groups. In addition, these watersheds are one of only two groups where the mean number of non-natives exceeds the mean number of natives. The presence of bullheads and sunfish, and the relative absence of native trout suggest warmer rivers.

Assemblage D-These watersheds are most common in Blue Mountains and the Central Idaho Mountains, and contain both steelhead and Chinook salmon. The watersheds exhibit high diversity with high numbers of native species and relatively few non-natives. The species' composition suggests a mix of high-quality, cold-water streams and cool-water rivers.

Assemblage E-These watersheds are found mainly in the Columbia Plateau and Blue Mountains, and contain steelhead but lack Chinook salmon. The watersheds tend to have moderate numbers of species, with very few nonnatives. The species' composition suggests a mix of high-quality, cold- and cool-water habitats.

Assemblage F-These watersheds are most common in the Northern Cascades and the Central Idaho Mountains, within the overlapping ranges of westslope cutthroat trout, steelhead, Chinook salmon, and bull trout. The watersheds include predominately native species, mostly salmonids and sculpins that are typical of coldwater habitats, with relatively low diversity.

Assemblage G-These watersheds are scattered through the Northern Cascades, Southern Cascades, Columbia Plateau, Blue Mountains, and Central Idaho Mountains. The watersheds include the fewest total species and highest percentage of nonnatives among the cooler-water assemblages that contain steelhead. Redband trout and steelhead are the only dominant species.

Assemblage H-These watersheds are found primarily in the Northern Glaciated Mountains, the Lower Clark Fork, and the Upper Clark Fork, outside the range of anadromous fish. They are distinguished by the presence of longnose suckers. They exhibit moderate numbers of species, predominately natives, though introduced rainbow and brook trout are common. The species mix and spatial distribution suggest mid- to higher elevation, cold- and cool-water streams.

Assemblage I-These watersheds are found in the Upper Snake and Snake Headwaters, within the range of Yellowstone cutthroat trout. The watersheds contain moderate numbers of species, mostly natives, but a relatively high ratio of nonnatives for the given species mix.

Assemblage J-These watersheds are scattered throughout the Basin, excluded only from the Southern Cascades and Upper Klamath. The watersheds exhibit moderate numbers of species and diversity, with a fair number of introduced fishes. Dominant species include redside shiners, mountain whitefish, and introduced rainbow trout, suggesting cool-water rivers or transitional areas.

Assemblage K-These watersheds are found most commonly in the Owyhee Upland, and scattered throughout the rest of the Basin. The watersheds exhibit high variability in species counts that are lower than average. Numbers of non-natives are low, but occasionally exceed native counts. Assemblage K is distinguished from Assemblage J by lack of mountain whitefish.

Assemblage L-These watersheds are found in the Southern Cascades, Upper Klamath, Northern Great Basin, and Columbia Plateau. The two dominant species are non-native bullhead and introduced rainbow trout. Non-native species often outnumber native species. Despite this apparent contradiction, the watersheds are very high in native species diversity and native ratio, suggesting a relatively diverse native fauna and fewer, but widespread non-native species.

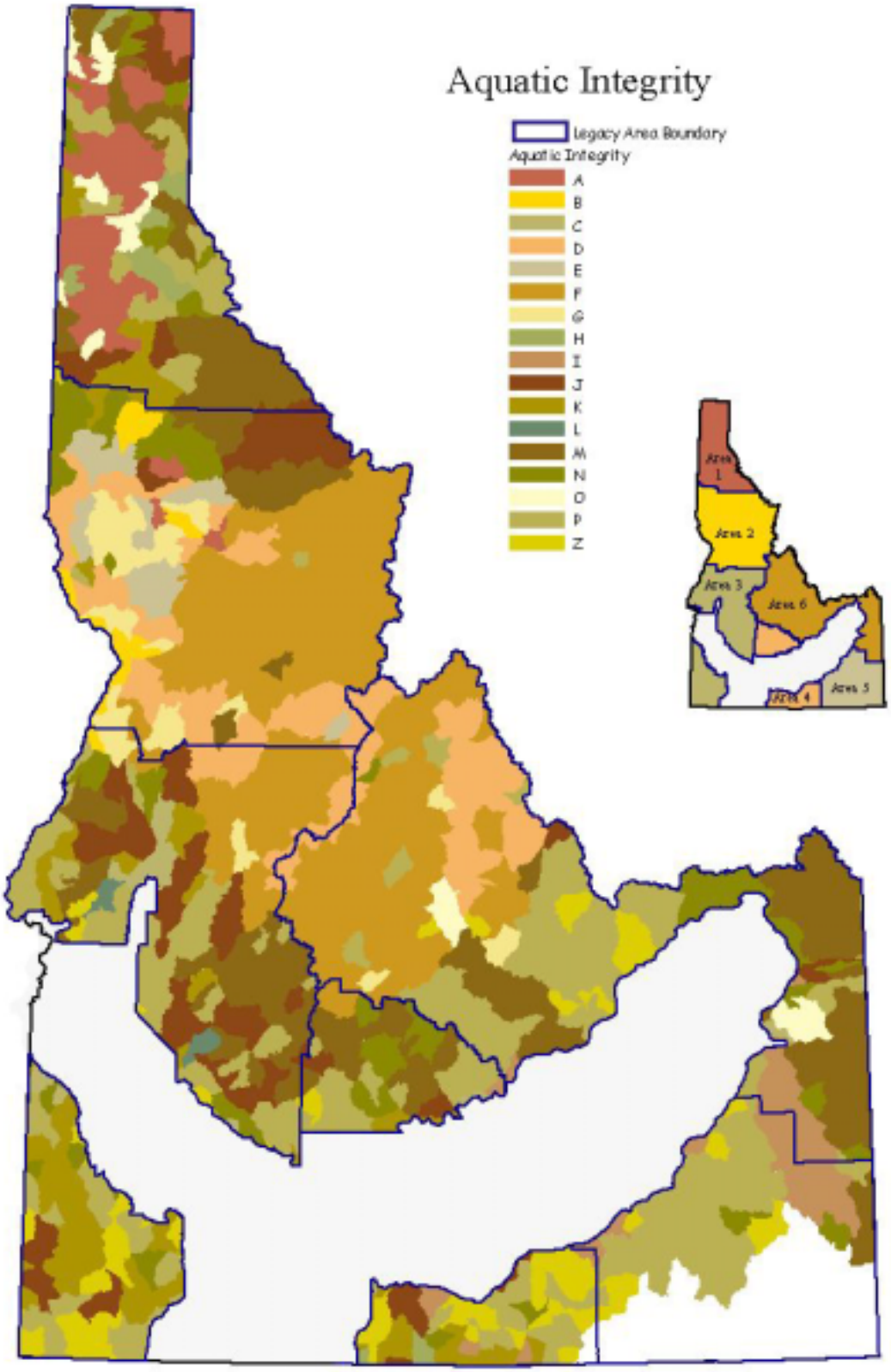
Assemblage M- These watersheds are found mainly in the Northern Glaciated Mountains, the Snake Headwaters, and the Central Idaho Mountains, but are scattered throughout other ERUS. The watersheds have low species counts, low diversity, and widespread non-natives. Mountain whitefish is the only dominant species, and is generally found in combination with trout and sculpins.

Assemblage N-These watersheds are scattered throughout the Basin, most commonly in the Columbia Plateau, and are excluded only from the Upper Clark Fork. Collectively, the watersheds contain a high total number of species, most of which occur only rarely. Mean counts and diversity are low. Trout and dace are the dominant groups, suggesting smaller, cold-water streams.

Assemblage O-These watersheds are scattered throughout the Basin and have very few species, averaging less than three per watershed. Given the distribution of this assemblage, it probably reflects areas that were incompletely sampled.

Assemblage P-The most abundant and wide spread of all assemblages, other than unclassified, these are areas where introduced rainbow trout are known present but, in general, few other species were reported. Reported non-native species generally outnumber native species, though the ratio of abundant natives to abundant taxa is high. Low evenness suggests unequal distribution of species.

Figure 5. Watershed Descriptions and Aquatic Species



Recreation and Tourism

The travel and recreation industry has emerged as a major component of the Idaho economy. The industry is comprised primarily of business firms and organizations that provide services and sell retail goods, such as lodging establishments, restaurants, recreational facilities and transportation services. The money that visitors spend on these goods and services while in Idaho creates employment for residents of the state. Travel spending also generates tax revenues for local and state governments, consisting primarily of sales and use taxes levied on the purchases of goods and services by the traveler. The state government also collects taxes on motor fuel, personal income of the employees, and the corporate income of businesses. The scenic beauty and recreational opportunities of Idaho's forests rate high among the primary attractions underlying the growth and stability of the travel and recreation industry on the state.

According to the Dean Runyan Associates study conducted for the Idaho Department of Commerce in 1997, visitors spent approximately $1.7 billion in Idaho in 1997. Spending on recreation and overnight travel directly supported over 24,000 jobs with a payroll of more than $274 million and generated over $134 million in local and state tax revenues.

Table 6. Summary of the Economic Effects of Travel in Idaho

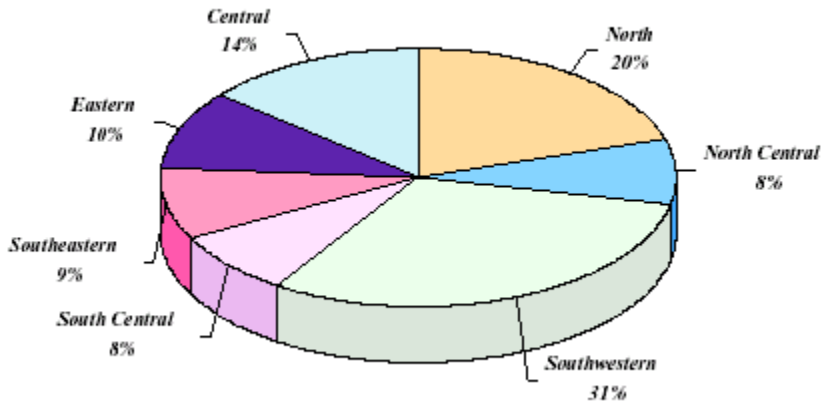
Travel Impacts at a Glance
1997

Travel Generated Spending ($000)	
Destination Spending	1,651,267
Air Transportation within Idaho	43,090
Total Spending	1,694,357
Travel Generated Payroll ($000)	274,140
Travel Generated Employment (Jobs)	24,309
Travel Generated Tax Receipts ($000)	
Local Taxes	3,979
State Taxes	130,497
Total Tax Receipts	134,476
Travel Spending per Resident ($)	1,425

Source: Dean Runyan Associates, 1997

A better understanding of the impact of recreation and travel on different areas of the Idaho can be gained by reviewing the 1997 Runyan study. The following provides estimates of travel impacts for seven regions within Idaho. The regional breakout indicates that while travel and recreation spending is significant statewide, the nature of the industry varies by region throughout the state.

Figure 6. Travel and Recreational Spending by Region of Idaho



Region	Counties
(1) North	Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, Shoshone
(2) North Central	Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, Nez Perce
(3) Southwestern	Ada, Adams, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, Valley, Washington
(4) South Central	Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, Twin Falls
(5) Southeastern	Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, Power
(6) Eastern	Bonneville, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson, Madison, Teton
(7) Central	Blaine, Butte, Camas, Custer, Lemhi

A further break down of the estimates has been made by county, as illustrated in Table 7, which shows estimates of total spending, employment, payroll and tax receipts for all of the Idaho counties. For rural counties and those with significant amounts of forestland, much of the recreation is termed as “dispersed”, including such activities as camping, hunting, hiking, fishing or other types of recreation not necessarily associated with concentrations of people (golf courses or beaches, for example). Given this, the relative use of land areas for dispersed recreation as depicted in Figure 8 and described for each Forest Legacy Area in Appendix III is also a useful indicator of recreation values. This data was prepared as part of the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Plan.

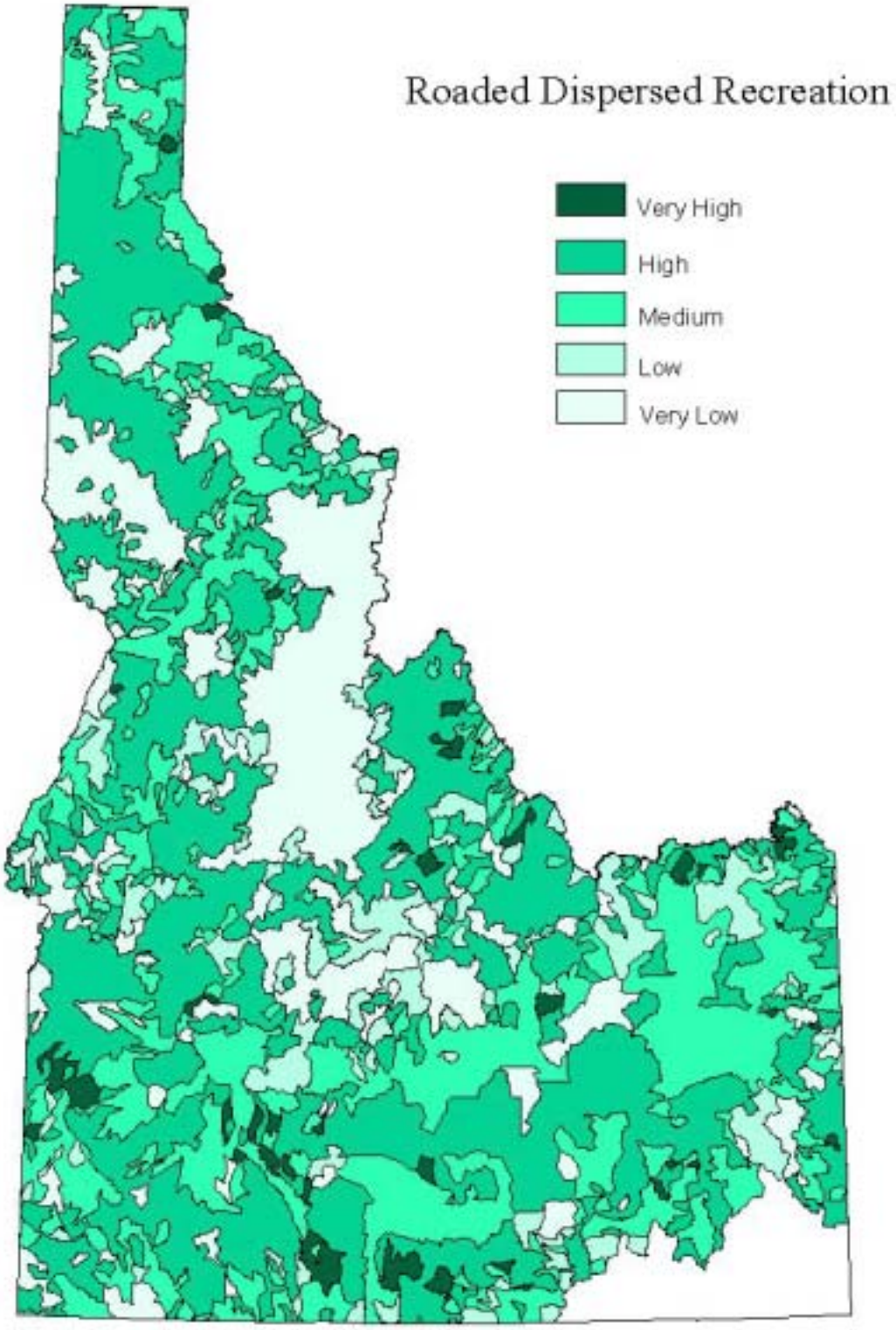
Table 7. Travel Spending by County, 1997

Travel Spending by County, 1997
($ 000)

Ada	323,696	Gem	8,311
Adams	6,028	Gooding	10,492
Bannock	80,951	Idaho	47,338
Bear Lake	12,056	Jefferson	6,441
Benewah	7,876	Jerome	9,679
Bingham	19,138	Kootenai	203,280
Blaine	150,781	Latah	41,192
Boise	14,201	Lemhi	21,589
Bonner	92,658	Lewis	4,044
Bonneville	87,875	Lincoln	3,392
Boundary	17,978	Madison	16,837
Butte	3,539	Minidoka	9,182
Camas	5,319	Nez Perce	33,436
Canyon	61,065	Oneida	2,848
Caribou	8,256	Owyhee	8,630
Cassia	27,228	Payette	7,942
Clark	3,933	Power	18,814
Cleanwater	12,620	Shoshone	20,249
Custer	55,800	Teton	10,363
Elmore	32,571	Twin Falls	75,432
Franklin	10,470	Valley	51,896
Fremont	40,738	Washington	8,193

Source: Dean Runyan Associates, 1997

Figure 7. Dispersed Recreational Use in Roaded Areas

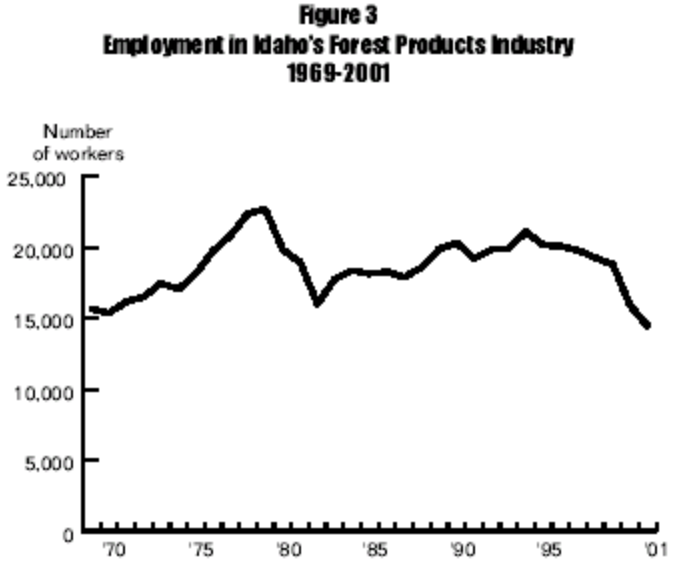


Forest Products

The principle economic values of Idaho's forestland have traditionally been derived from the forest products industry and thus, for this section the assessment of economic values will come from timber related parameters. Other values, such as recreation, fish and wildlife, minerals, and watersheds are discussed in previous sections. The state's forestland, particularly it's private land, has been historically been managed for the production of timber that can be manufactured into a host of forest products. For purposes of this assessment timber harvest, the resulting mill employment and wood products production represent the principle values to be considered.

In 2001, the estimated total sales value of Idaho's primary wood and paper products was $1.3 billion, down about 11 percent from approximately $1.45 billion in the previous year. Estimated forest industry employment was 14,460, a decrease of about 1400 workers from 2000. This number also includes approximately 2,000 people employed in the pulp and paper industry. Other sections of this Assessment refer to "lumber employment" and this should be interpreted as those working in the lumber and plywood industry and does not include pulp and paper workers.

Figure 8. Employment in Idaho's Forest Products Industry



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce; Bureau of Business and Economic Research, The University of Montana-Missoula; Idaho Department of Labor.

Idaho's estimated lumber production was less than 1.8 billion board feet in 2001, down 7 percent from 1.9 billion board feet in 2000. Due to closures and curtailments, plywood production decreased 20 percent from 2000 levels. Weak paperboard markets lead to curtailments of production in November at Potlatch Corporation's Lewiston paper mill.

In mid-2001, Boise Cascade Corporation permanently closed its Idaho lumber and plywood operations due to uncertainty in national forest timber offerings. For South Idaho, the closure of the Emmett and Cascade mills will have a substantial impacts on local economies and demand for saw timber. The lack of competition for public timber sales from the closure of these mills is estimated to have reduced timber values by approximately $100 per thousand board feet *(Northwest Natural Resource Group, 2001)*.

There are near term, more positive factors for the forest products industry resulting from recent declines in the cost of energy and mortgage interest rates. Unfortunately, improvements in the markets for wood products will do little to help those communities that no longer have sawmills. Investment in new manufacturing facilities and the resulting jobs that might be created will be almost certainly be limited by the availability of timber in the near term.

Figure 9. Historical Sources of Timber in Idaho

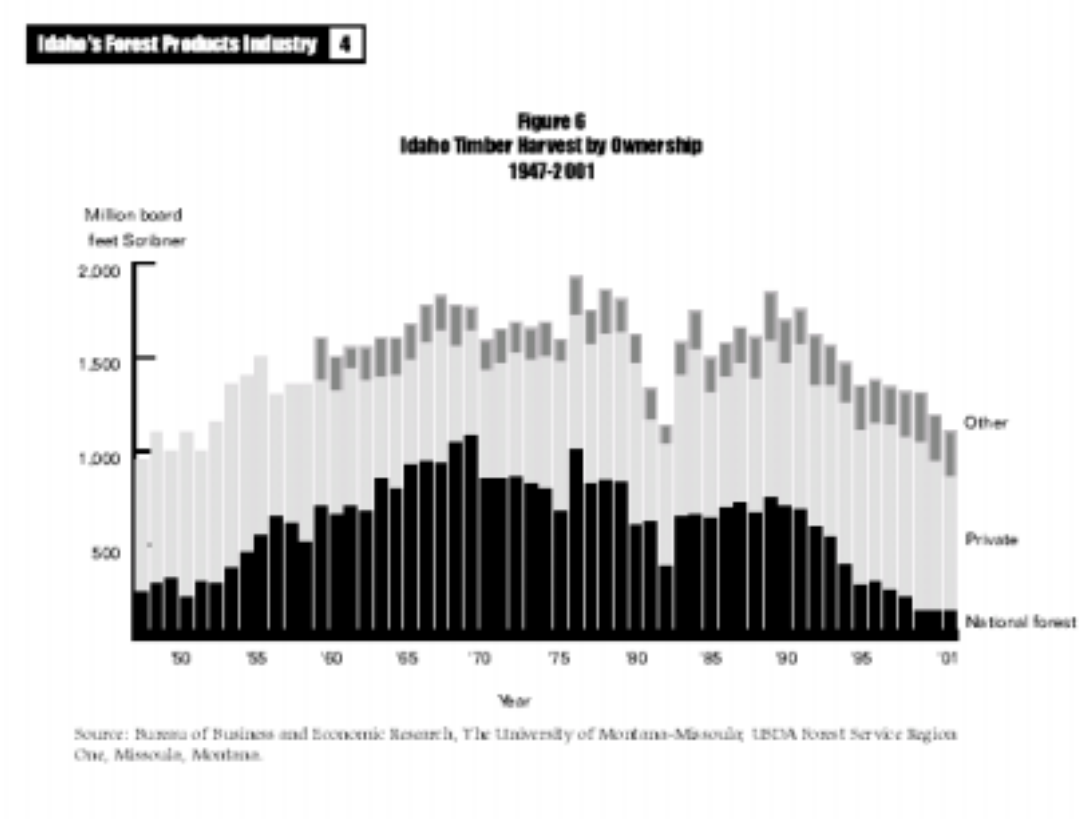
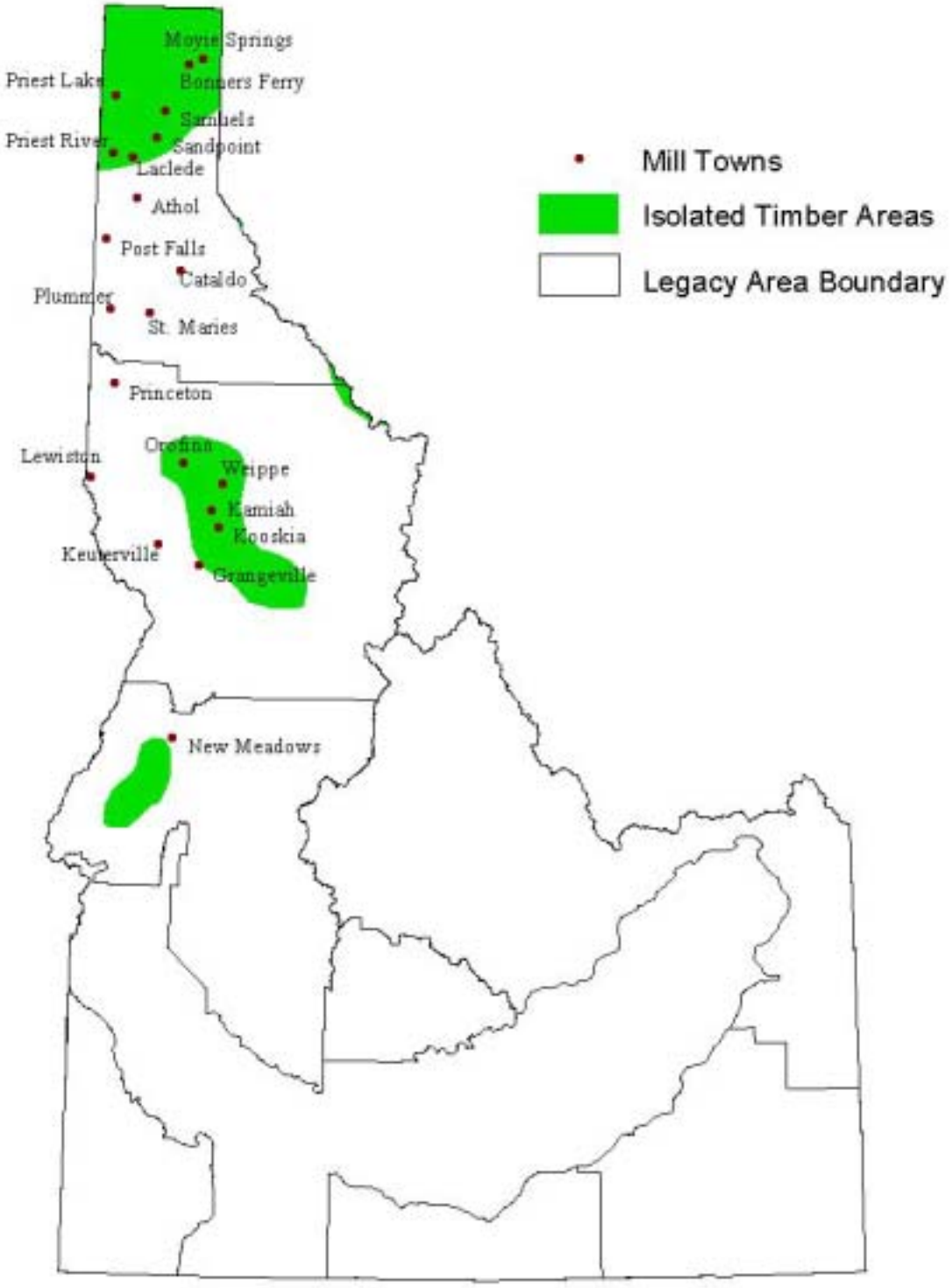


Figure 10. Mill Towns and Timber Dependent Areas in Idaho



Private Ownership of Idaho's Forests and Woodlands

The Forest Legacy Program focuses exclusively on private lands, specifically private lands that can be classed as forest and woodlands by virtue of having some tree cover. In Idaho, there are two main classes of forested lands—"timberlands" and "woodlands", and two classes of forest landowners—"industrial" and "nonindustrial" *(USDA Forest Service)*. Each class of land provides some values, either in terms of direct economic values associated with timber or livestock production or in the wildlife, recreational, aesthetic or other values that each owner perceives. Similarly, each landowner has in mind different goals for managing their land to produce or maintain those values. A discussion of each of these attributes of private land ownership is pertinent to a fuller understanding of how the Forest Legacy Program might function in Idaho.

Figure. 11 Forest and Woodland Ownership in Idaho

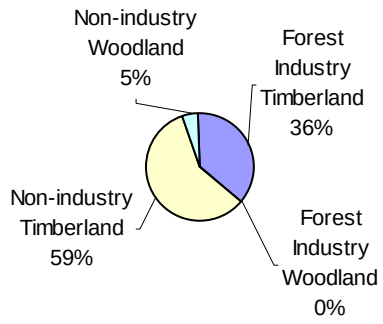


Table 8. Forest and Woodland OwnershipIn Idaho (Acres)

	North Idaho	South Idaho	Total
Forest Industry			
Timberland	1,066,058	173,406	1,239,464
Woodland	0	14	14
Non-Industrial Owners			
Timberland	1,489,720	538,607	2,028,327
Woodland	0	168,278	168,278
Total	**2,555,778**	**880,305**	**3,436,083**

(Source: USDA Forest Service)

As noted on page 5, "timberland" and "woodlands" as used by the Forest Service in their periodic surveys of these lands have two distinct meanings. "Timberland" includes areas where tree species that are normally used commercially make up at least ten percent of the other tree species growing on the site. "Woodlands" include those other lands where the tree species are not commercially valuable. In a refinement of that basic concept, the Idaho Tax Commission allows land to be taxed as "forest land" if it is essentially managed for that purpose. Essentially, then, the definition of "forest land" in the Idaho Code does not include "woodlands" as defined above. Most of these lands are

classed by the Tax Commission as “dry land grazing”, with a separate tax treatment for them. Table 9 summarizes forestlands by county, according to the Tax Commission. The difference between the total timbered acres treated by the Tax Commission as “forest land” (2,230,159) and the total reported by the Forest Service (3,436,083) is likely to include parcels of land under five acres which Idaho law prohibits being classed as “forest land” and the “woodland” acres generally classed for “dry land grazing”, even if there is some tree cover.

Table 9. Private Timber Owners by County

County	Timbered Acres	[1]Average County Ownership	[2]NIPF Average Ownership
Adams	72,159	355	80
Benewah	240,569	282	93
Boise	81,417	457	177
Bonner	189,683	86	48
Boundary	113,533	83	53
Clearwater	405,543	594	69
Elmore	6,195	163	163
Gem	840	280	280
Idaho	66,461	89	72
Kootenai	340,001	93	66
Latah	211,637	145	63
Lewis	39,936	158	134
Nez Perce	21,576	77	77
Shoshone	317,557	659	104
Valley	123,051	393	97
Totals/Averages	***2,230,159***	***261***	***105***

[1]Includes ownerships over 5,000 acres in size.
[2]All timbered owners under 5,000 acres in size.

Source: Idaho Tax Commission

Beyond distinctions based on the amount of tree cover and the purposes for which the land is managed, there is another major distinction to be made in land ownership. “Industrial lands” include those owned by forest products companies and where the clear ownership objective has been to produce commercially valuable crops of timber (although companies are increasingly looking to the other economic value that these lands might have). “Nonindustrial private landowners” (often referred to by NIPFs) have always been somewhat of an enigma to foresters. While these lands typically produce large volumes of timber, this is not often cited as the major ownership goal of these landowners (*Force and Lee*), and how to educate and help these landowners in managing these forests has resulted in numerous public programs and private efforts.

In Idaho, Drs. Jo Ellen Force and Harry Lee set out to determine the social and demographic characteristics of nonindustrial forest landowners, along with their perceptions of the benefits of owning their lands and their plans for it. Among their other findings, they concluded that the reasons for owning forestland in Idaho were generally consistent with those reported in other states. Reasons other than timber production were frequently mentioned and these included recreation, wildlife and aesthetics, as well as simply a “feeling of satisfaction” from owning the land. Although nonindustrial lands typically supply one quarter of Idaho’s annual timber harvest, one-fourth of Idaho’s nonindustrial landowners do not plan to harvest timber and nearly half are undecided. These landowners state that the loss of recreational and scenic values is the most important reason for not

harvesting timber, although over half the landowners surveyed reported that they have harvested timber in the past.

Idaho's typical nonindustrial landowner is most likely to be retired, with an average age of 56. Most live on farms or ranches or in small towns, although this characteristic is most evident among larger nonindustrial landowners. The three major reasons for owning land include preserving wildlife, providing wood for their own purposes, and aesthetic enjoyment. Much farther down the list was "income from timber", although larger landowners frequently cited that reason along with the importance of the land for grazing. Significantly, fifteen percent of the landowners planned to sell a part of their lands within five years and 25 percent of the smaller landowners anticipated selling at least part of their lands.

Despite the reported lack of enthusiasm among many nonindustrial landowners for harvesting timber, this ownership provides timber in an amount that very nearly captures annual sawtimber growth of 447.6 million board feet. On the other hand, timber harvests on industry lands typically exceeds annual sawtimber growth of 292.6 million board feet, largely because the older, slower growing timber is being cut and replaced with new trees that will grow more rapidly *(USDA Forest Service)*. All told, timber from both industry and nonindustrial lands make up generally half the total timber harvest in the state.

Table 10. Private Timber Harvests in Idaho*

Year	PNIF	Industry	Total, All Sources	Percent PNIF	Percent Ind
1992	393,192,672	339,578,711	1,664,500,000	23.6	20.4
1993	393,192,672	368,727,488	1,610,300,000	24.4	22.9
1994	414,413,155	440,732,887	1,507,100,000	27.5	29.2
1995	344,714,486	464,630,560	1,380,600,000	25.0	33.7
1996	289,869,165	532,533,749	1,414,400,000	20.5	37.7
1997	328,224,761	550,414,402	1,368,500,000	24.0	40.2
1998	263,364,925	489,893,430	1,272,200,000	20.7	38.5
1999	355,706,717	532,255,101	1,336,600,000	26.6	39.8
2000	317,652,341	492,497,137	1,212,600,000	26.2	40.6

**Volumes in Board Feet*

Source: USDA Forest Service and Idaho Dept. of Lands

Implications for the Forest Legacy Program

Two aspects of private lands and private landowners highlight the importance of the Forest Legacy Program in Idaho. First, the steady rise in the percentage of timber cut each year from private lands implies that any reduction in the amount available from that source could contribute to the closure of more mills in Idaho. The Legacy Program's goal of reducing conversions of forest lands to nonforest uses will help maintain "working forest landscapes" that will support a viable forest industry in the state.

Despite a significant number of landowners who doubt that they will ever sell timber, the evidence would indicate otherwise. It would be very rare indeed to find a parcel of nonindustrial land where some past cutting has not taken place, and substantial volumes are cut each year from this ownership. Even if a particular landowner has no plans to harvest timber, forest health considerations or a

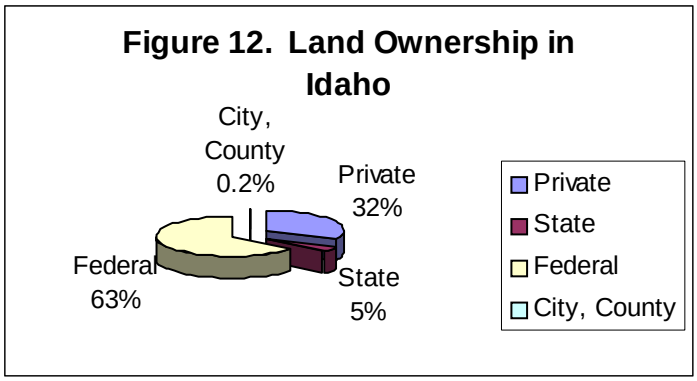
change in ownership can easily cause a change in that objective. Private nonindustrial lands play a major role as a source of timber within the state and will likely continue to do so.

Second, nonindustrial landowners, particularly, value all that their forests provide in addition to timber. In fact, it is the loss of the non-timber values that is most often cited as the reason for not harvesting timber. Given some reluctance to harvest timber in order to protect those scenic, recreational and wildlife values, it would seem that there would be an equal reluctance to see these values lost through development of the land. On the other hand, Drs. Force and Lee found that 28 percent of the landowners viewed their lands as an investment and 15 percent of all landowners (25% of smaller landowners) did indicate that they would likely sell at least part of their lands within five years. This would argue that nonindustrial landowners are motivated by money. To the extent this is true, increasing land values would be an enticement to monetize the value of nonindustrial forestlands. The Legacy Program, however, would allow landowners to achieve a significant portion of that value while still meeting their clear goals of protecting all the other values.

Demographic and Economic Trends and Their Implications for Land Use

Clearly as society progresses, land uses will necessarily change. Cities and home must be built, the population has transportation needs, forests are cleared and wetland areas drained for agriculture and their streams realigned or controlled. At the time of each change, someone, probably most people, believed these changes to be necessary and good. Only when society reaches a relative level of affluence—much of which is the result of past land use decisions—can the question of "how much" can be raised.

Idaho, like many other states, is raising that question. One of the larger states in terms of land mass, Idaho has always had "room to grow", and with about two-thirds of the state in public ownership where there is no foreseeable potential for residential or urban development it would seem that the state will always retain its rural character. The other side of that argument, though, is that since so much of the state is in public ownership, all the growth and development must be accommodated on the relatively small amount of privately owned land. Therefore, even in a large state like Idaho, the question of how much of that land should be developed and how much should remain in traditional uses is as intense as it might be in a smaller more populated state where most of the land is privately owned.



(Source: Idaho Dept. of Commerce)

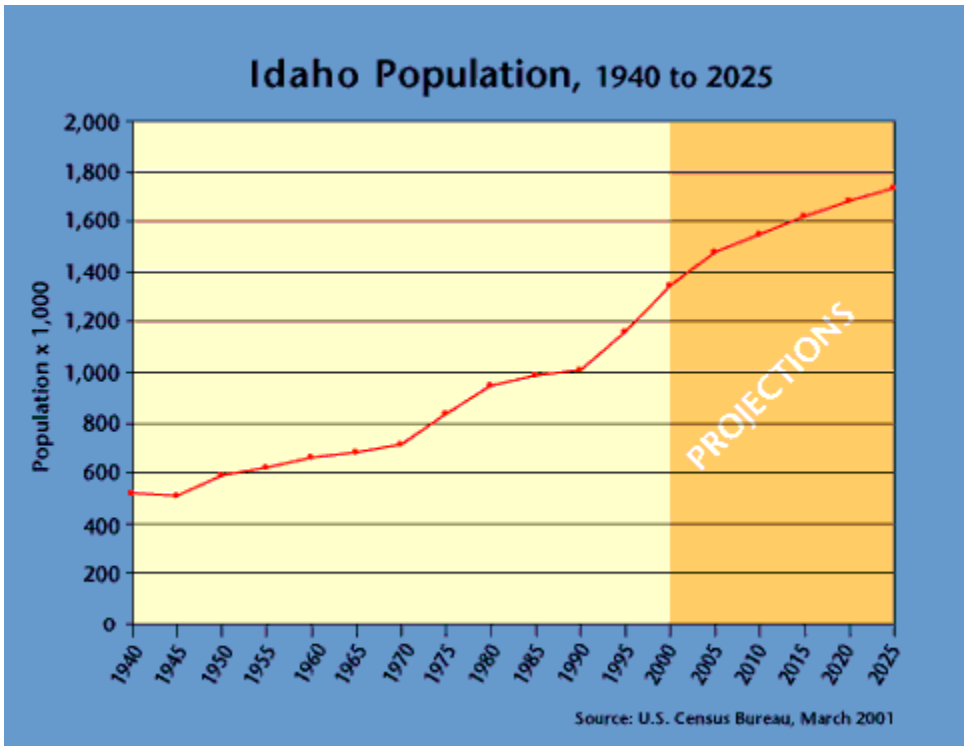
Four basic demographic and economic trends in Idaho are combining to make rural forested lands more attractive for uses that would convert them from either forests or change the uses for which they have traditionally been managed. They are:

1. Growth in population, particularly in the urban areas of the state,
2. A decline in the traditional agriculture and forest products sectors of the economy relative to the rest of the state's economy, and,
3. An influx of part time residents or recreational visitors to rural areas of the state.

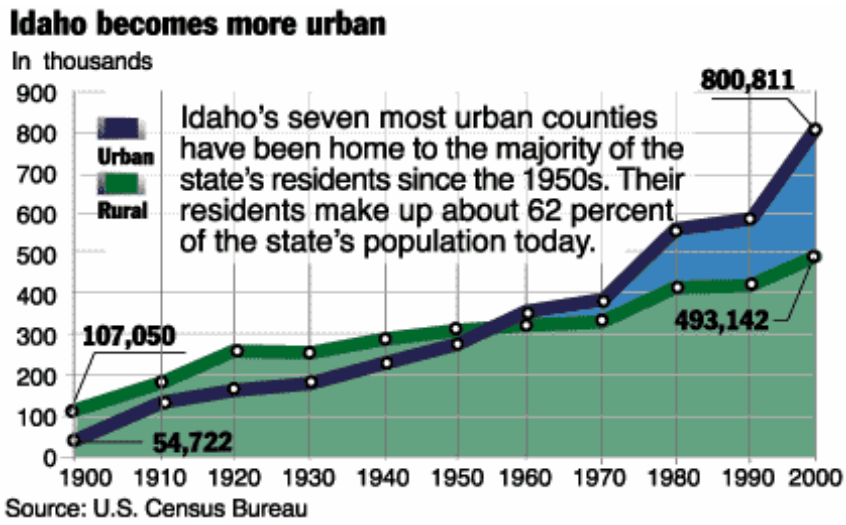
Population Growth

According to the 2000 census, Idaho gained 287,219 people during the decade 1990-2000, for a 28.6% increase and leaving the state with a total population of 1,293,953. This made Idaho the fifth fastest growing state in the nation, and Ada County was one of the fastest growing counties in the country *(Center for the American West, 2001)*. It is to be noted that Idaho grew more slowly than most other western states until the 1990's; so most of the growth occurred during the last half of that decade and at a rate that exceeded those of the other western states. About half the state's total population growth has been in the past 30 years, with an additional 475,000 people since 1970 *(Idaho Dept. of Commerce)*.

Figure 13. Population Growth Projections for Idaho



The Center for the American West's "Western Futures" project estimates that over the next quarter century, Idaho will gain approximately another 450,000 people. As noted elsewhere in this report, such a growth in population poses two challenges in terms of private forestlands that might be converted to other, nonforest uses. The first is that urban and suburban areas will inevitably grow, and to the extent that those areas are within forested landscapes, forestlands will yield to that growth and be developed. Such trends are already evident around Sandpoint, Coeur d'Alene, and Moscow. As noted by the Idaho Statesman in its November 2001 series "Rural Idaho: Challenged to Change", two-thirds of the state's population now lives in Idaho's seven most urbanized counties (Figure 15).

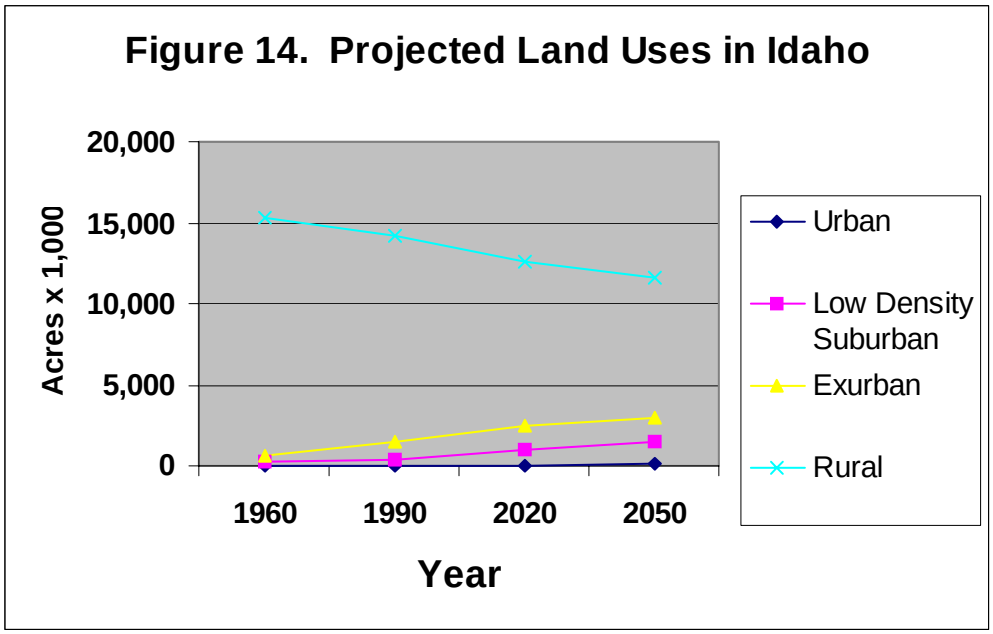


The second challenge is that some percentage of the additional people will be both affluent and wanting to take advantage of the amenities and lifestyles of Idaho's rural, forested areas, even if only

on weekends and vacations. So, lands that might have otherwise remain forested will become highly valuable for recreational home sites, a trend that has been evident in many areas of the state for a number of year, most notably in the Northern Panhandle, the Clearwater Valley, around McCall, in the Bear River area and throughout the Northeast area.

Dr. David M. Theobald of Colorado State University has developed a model that is based on census data and which predicts future residential densities of lands throughout the West *(Center for the American West, 2001)*. Dr. Theobald's work identifies four densities of residential development: (1) "urban" with population densities of more than 1,000 people per square mile or 2 housing units per acre, (2) "suburban", with 0.1-0.5 units per acre, (3) "exurban" where residential densities range from one unit per 10 to 40 acres ("ranchette" developments) and, (4) "rural" with working farms and ranches occur at densities of one residence per 40 acres or more.

Through this model, the Center for the American West's "Mapping Development" project projects that from 1990 to 2050 rural lands with residential densities of less than one residence per 40 acres will have decreased by 19 percent to accommodate the growth of urban, suburban and exurban areas. This translates into a conversion of 2.64 million acres of rural lands.



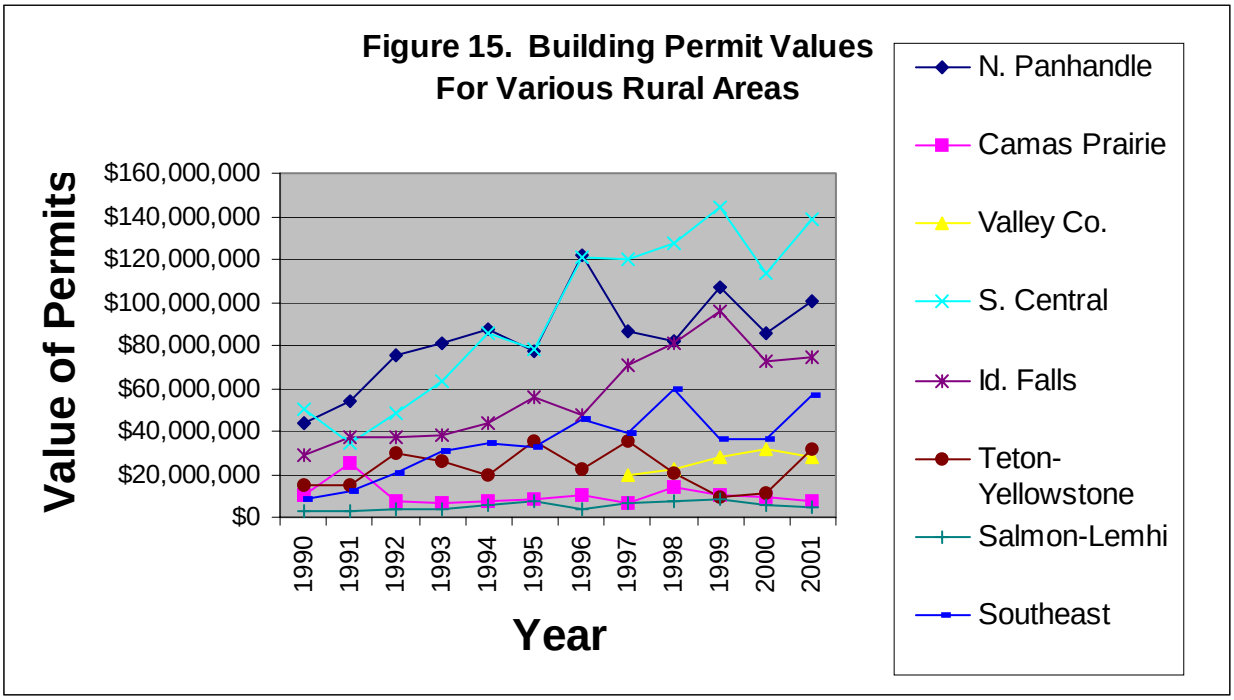
Source: Center for the American West

While the Center makes no projection on how much of this land will be forested, it is clear that some portion of it will be. Unfortunately, definitive data on the impacts that population growth and its attendant demand on rural, forested lands is hard to come by, although the Center's maps of projected areas of growth in Idaho (Figure 16) provide some indication. Clearly, land is being converted to nonforest uses and the trend seems to be increasing, although perhaps not at the same pace that the state's population is increasing. In 1998, the Natural Resource Conservation Service estimated that conversions of forestland to nonforest uses took place at the rate of 2,210 acres per year during the

ten-year period 1982-1992 (when the population was increasing at 10,630 people per year) and then increased to 2,840 acres per year from 1992 to 1997 (while population increased 31,367 per year).

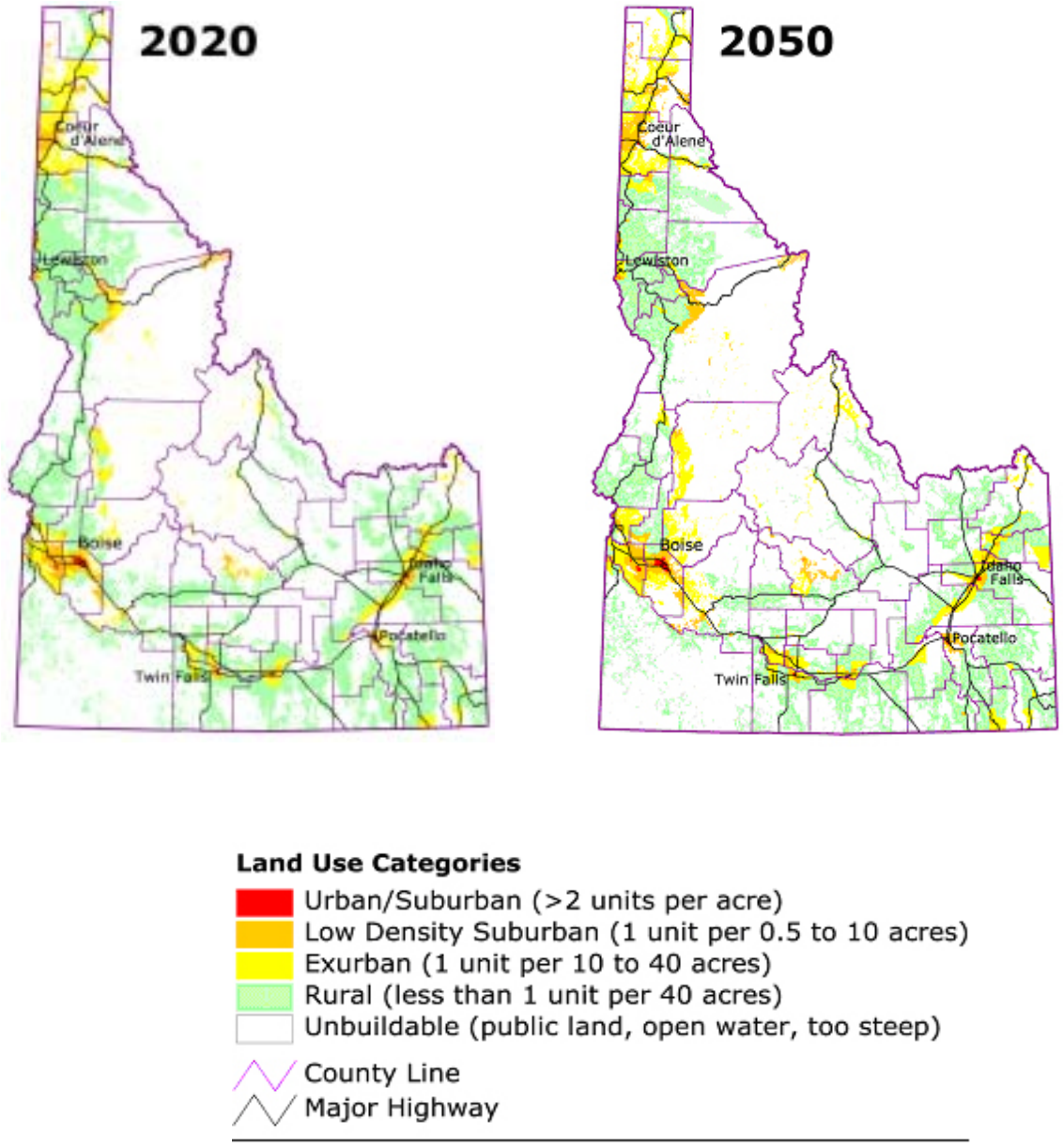
During the fifteen-year study period (1982-1997), urban land grew by 37 percent, rising from 550,200 to 754,900 across the state *(NRCS, 2001)*. While obviously not all the land newly devoted to urbanization was forested, some portion of the lands in Idaho's Forest Legacy areas clearly was, perhaps a significant portion. In addition, during the same period 6,700 acres of forested lands was converted to "farmsteads" and 2,700 acres lost to roads and permanent transportation structures *(NRCS, 2001)*.

A final clue into the past conversion of rural forested lands into nonforest uses lies within the value of new construction in rural areas of the state. While there are some obvious gaps in the data presented in Figure 17 (for example, there is little data for the McCall area), the trends illustrated in the graph clearly show rising construction values in most rural areas. Appendix II presents this data in tabular form.



(Source: Idaho Dept. of Commerce from Wells Fargo Bank reports)

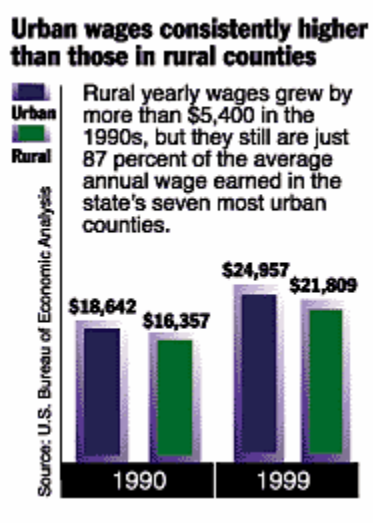
Figure 16. The Center for the American West Projected Growth Areas



Changes in Idaho's Economy

Over the last quarter of the past century, Idaho experienced economic and demographic trends common in more populous areas of the country for at least a hundred years prior—more people moved off the land and to the cities and non-farm jobs claimed an increasing share of the overall economy. During this period, Idaho saw a 143% increase in nonfarm employment (299,300 new jobs), while agricultural employment decreased by 21%, a loss of approximately 9,100 jobs.

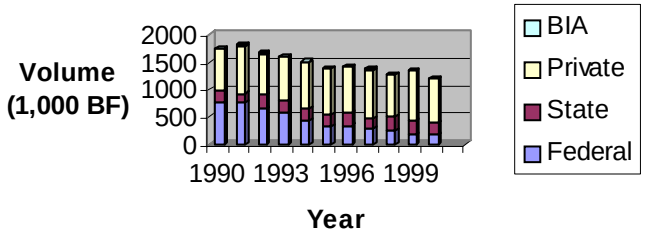
As reported in the Idaho Statesman's series on "Rural Idaho" *(11/2001)*, not only has rural Idaho lost population to urban areas, the contribution of urban wage earners to the state's economy has increased. In 1990, wages in rural and urban areas were nearly equal. By 2000, wages paid to urban workers were over $3,000 more than for their rural counterparts.



Perhaps nowhere is the change in Idaho's economy from agriculture or natural resource based, rural jobs to light manufacturing and service jobs in urban areas more evident than in the state's forest products industry. A short decade ago, virtually no could have—or did—predict the rapid changes in employment in Idaho's timber regions and the changes in the structure of the forest products industry in the state. Fueled by both reductions in national forest timber offerings and reduced demand and prices for wood products, 36 mills permanently closed during the period 1989-2001, with 2,236 timber workers losing their jobs *(Ehinger and Associates, 2001)* (figure 8).

The Idaho Department of Commerce notes that in the 1970's timber industry employment peaked at almost 20,000 jobs. Current estimates are that there are approximately 12,000 timber workers in the state. While market conditions and increases in productivity undoubtedly account for some of the job losses, the sharp declines in timber sales from the national forests in the state have taken a severe toll. Timber from those lands—the largest ownership of timber in Idaho—has declined 77 percent from the peak years *(Idaho Statesman, 11/01)*.

Figure 17. Total Timber Harvests In Idaho, 1990-2000



(Source: USDA, Forest Service)

Table 11 shows the impact of those closures in each of the counties with sawmills in Idaho's Forest Legacy areas. The table also shows that, relative to other parts of the state, the "timber counties" have not fared well, economically, with both unemployment rates and poverty levels above the statewide averages in the three Legacy Areas where timber has been a traditional economic force. It should be noted that such other factors as reductions in the mining industry also contributed to high unemployment in these counties. However, Figure 17, which highlights total timber harvests, by ownership, across the state, implies the strong relationship that one would expect between employment in the lumber industry and timber harvest levels.

Table 11. Unemployment and Poverty in Idaho's Legacy Areas

	Unemployment, 1989	Unemployment, 1999	% Change	Percent of People Below Poverty Level, 2000
Boundary	5.4	9.2	70.4	16.5%
Bonner	7.4	9.6	29.7	15.2%
Benewah	8.1	12.4	53.1	14.4%
Kootenai	6.2	8.1	30.6	11.5%
Shoshone	8	11.3	41.3	20.1%
Northern Panhandle Totals	**7**	**10.1**	**45**	**15.5%**
Clearwater	9.3	13.5	45.2	14.9%
Latah	3.2	3.3	3.1	13.5%
Lewis	4.9	6.7	36.7	15.2%
Nez Perce	4.2	3.9	-7.1	12.8%
Idaho	6.5	10.8	66.2	17.6%
Central Totals	**5.62**	**7.64**	**28.82**	**14.8%**
Adams	11.7	14.9	27.4	14.6%
Boise	7.6	7.3	-3.9	11.3%
Elmore	5	6.5	30	12.7%
Owyhee	4.3	4.3	0	21.4%
Valley	6.8	9.5	39.7	13.8%
Washington	8.2	8.2	0	18.4%
Southwest Totals	**7.3**	**8.45**	**15.5**	**15.4%**
Camas	5	4.2	-16	7.4%
Blaine	4	3.8	-5	7.5%
Cassia	7	6.9	-1.4	15.4%
Twin Falls	4.8	4.9	-2.1	14.1%
South Central Totals	**5.2**	**4.95**	**-5.1**	**11.1%**
Bannock	6.5	5.2	-20	13.9%
Bear Lake	6.6	4.5	-31.8	13.4%
Bingham	6.8	5	-26.5	14.7%
Caribou	4.9	6	22.4	9.6%
Franklin	3.3	3.5	6.1	12.5%
Oneida	3.6	4.1	13.9	12.8%
Power	9	7.2	-20	17.8%
Southeast Totals	**5.8**	**5.1**	**-7.9**	**13.5%**
Bonneville	4.4	3.6	-18.2	12.2%
Butte	4.8	3.9	-18.8	15.4%
Clark	5.9	3.5	-40.7	12.4%
Custer	4.5	8.2	82.2	12.1%
Fremont	7.3	6.9	-5.5	14.4%
Lemhi	6.3	7.9	25.4	15.8%
Madison	5.1	2.6	-49	15.3%
Teton	5.1	3.5	-31.4	9.7%
Northeast Totals	**5.4**	**5**	**-7**	**13.4%**
Statewide Totals	***5.1***	***3.3***	***-35.3***	***13***

The graphs and tables for the forest industry and the people it employs tell other stories, as well as the obvious. First, while lumber employment has declined and mills have closed, the industry remains an important part of Idaho's economy, particularly in the areas where mills remain in business. Second, reductions in federal timber sales have resulted in increasing harvests from private timberlands. This implies that those mills remaining in the state will need to continually rely on private timberlands (assuming no significant change in the federal timber sale program) if they are to remain in business.

The combination of increased demand on rural forested lands for residential and recreational home sites coupled with increased reliance on private timberlands to support the state's remaining forest industry underscores the importance of the Forest Legacy Program in Idaho. One objective of the program is to limit conversions of these important forestlands to other uses and to help maintain the economic benefits that the forest industry continues to provide in some areas of the state.

Demand for Less Tangible Forest Values

A final trend that is creating new demands for Idaho's privately owned forestlands is grounded both in the increase in population and the change in the state's economy. Increasingly, Idaho's urban residents as well as people from outside the state want to own a part of these lands, in large part as a site for a recreational home. Again, data is scarce regarding the purchase of lands for this purpose. However, the trend is clearly visible as one travels through such areas as the Bear River Valley, around Coeur d'Alene or Sandpoint, from McCall to Boise and in the Island Park area.

Consider excerpts from two actual advertisements for lands for sale in the Central Forest Legacy area. Both areas have high wildlife values and could be a part of a "working forest" landscape, and both have values for anadromous fisheries. Both are now also, as evidenced by the ads, candidates for developments, likely to be recreational subdivisions.

"Beauty Creek Estates (not the real name) is comprised of twelve parcels of land averaging 16.6 acres each…Here there are hundreds of miles of pristine rivers and streams teeming with trout…Five rivers have been designated as part of the Wild and Scenic River System..This is a recreationists paradise!…The sight of Bald Eagles "fishing" the local rivers during the winter provides an unforgettable thrill…Idaho County has wilderness—lots of it! Almost half of the Nez Perce National Forest's 2.2 million acres has been designated…Thousands of trees have been planted to enhance the aesthetics of the native forest and to provide wildlife corridors…the land continues to be treated with loving care."

Marketing of these tracts of land seem to be targeted toward retirees or others who might enjoy the "limited government" and low taxes of the area. Prices for the remaining tracts to be sold averaged $4,640 per acre, making the entire original 200-acre ownership worth approximately just under $ 1 million.

The second partial of land targets a purchaser with either enough money for a private hunting preserve or someone desiring to purchase an existing outfitting business. It was described in Inc., "The Magazine for Growing Companies".

"An operating ranch in hunting and fishing heaven: 105 private Idaho acres…surrounded by the biggest U.S. Wilderness Area in the lower 48…expeditions for deer, elk, steelhead generate 70% of the ranch's revenues, the balance comes from guests for horseback riding, river floating or relaxing in rustic, cozy cabins…There aren't many such properties left in America…the seller suggests the purchase price could constitute a real estate play, too; 70 of the ranch's acres could be subdivided…Price $2.5 million."

Both of these actual examples share commonalities. They each use recreation, wildlife and wilderness values as marketing tools. They also are either the product of or anticipate future subdivisions of the original property. Both target affluent buyers and both are heavily promoted to an out-of-state market. Finally, both will undoubtedly change the habitat for wildlife and the very values that the sellers are exploiting, once the lands are sold and the new owners either subdivide the land or build on it.

This is a trend that is being repeated, not only in Idaho but also throughout the West. In these cases, recreational and wildlife values were being emphasized as major selling points. In eastern Idaho, near the Wyoming border, the situation is slightly different. There, instead of buyers seeking to "buy" a share of the area's environmental values, new residents are drawn there because of the existence of affordable private land and the ability to live there and commute to nearby Jackson Hole. As reported in the fall, 2001 issue of Programs and People: The U of I College of Agriculture Magazine, Mel Coulter described Idaho's and neighboring Wyoming's Teton Counties:

"The key difference between the two counties is the availability of private land for development. New homes—made of logs or rough-hewn lumber—spring from agricultural land like new potatoes…in the mid-1970's there were only two formal subdivisions…Today there are more than 100, land values have skyrocketed…manufactured homes, planted on a two and one-half acre plot, commonly carry a price tag of $150,000 or more."

The implications of these examples for Idaho's privately owned forestlands are obvious—it is becoming increasingly valuable and sought after for purposes other than growing trees or grazing cattle. It is being marketed either for its own intrinsic environmental values or for its proximity to public lands. Unfortunately, the increase in monetary value and the inevitable development of this land threatens the all that which makes it attractive, including sustained wildlife, scenic and timber values. How Idaho reconciles the desire of private landowners to capture the value of their lands without destroying much of the underlying nature of that value will be a major issue as the state steps into the new century. The Forest Legacy Program will provide a useful tool for that effort.

Existing Conservation Efforts in Idaho

There are a number of existing efforts that seek to protect either environmentally important forested lands in Idaho or the values associated with such lands. The efforts take two basic forms—"regulatory programs", with an objective of protecting such values as fish or water quality while allowing continued resource management and "protection programs", wherein specific activities on specific areas of land are prohibited or tightly controlled. Existing conservation programs also can be classified into publicly supported programs (both state and federal) and privately funded or administered efforts.

Publicly Supported Programs

Idaho Forest Practices Act—In existence since 1974, the Idaho Forest Practices Act rules represent common sense actions necessary to protect fish and water quality, particularly, from negative impacts from forest management. The rules are mandatory and enforced by the Bureau of Forestry Assistance within the Idaho Department of Lands.

The Forest Practices Act is also an extension of the federal "Clean Water Act" and represents Idaho's implementation of this law as it relates to forest management. As a result, the forest practice rules must be sufficiently stringent to meet approved water quality standards. For example, there are standards for stream temperature that are mandated by the federal law and which Idaho must meet. As streams flow through forested lands, the Idaho Forest Practice Act rules require that enough streamside shade and large trees be left to prevent undue warming of the water. When water quality standards are not met, then federal law requires that a "total maximum daily load" be developed to reduce pollutants within the watershed so that, once again, standards are achieved. In addition, every four years, Idaho's Forest Practice Act rules are "audited" in the field to make sure they are applied and effective. The quadrennial audits have resulted in a number of changes to strengthen the rules.

Other Forest Management Programs—In addition to administering the Forest Practices Act, the Idaho Department of Lands, with the cooperation of the Forest Service's State and Private Forestry branch, offers additional technical help and financial incentives to nonindustrial landowners. These include: the Forest Resource Management Program (technical assistance to landowners), the Forest Stewardship Program (technical and financial assistance for private land management), and, the Stewardship Incentive Program (technical and financial assistance for multi-resource forest practices).

Conservation Tax Incentives—Several years ago, the Idaho Legislature adopted a tax credit of up to $2,000 per landowner per year for expenses related to complying with a TMDL or enhancing the habitat for endangered, threatened or candidate species. Such practices might include fencing riparian areas in spawning areas for bull trout or salmon. The Idaho Soil Conservation Commission administers the act.

County Subdivision Limitations—Some counties have adopted ordinances that limit the ability of "casual" divisions of rural property. Those counties with such requirements will not issue building permits for parcels of land below certain sizes that were sold from larger parcels subsequent to the passage of the law unless those lands are to be developed as a fully platted and improved subdivision.

Property Tax Treatments—Rural landowners may opt for various land classifications that allow for lower taxes than if their lands were taxed at "highest and best use". For timberland owners, there is the option of having property taxes based on the land's capability of producing crops of timber or at an even lower rate with a yield tax collected at the time of timber harvest. Landowners who have lands with scattered trees and who use that land for livestock grazing may opt for the "dryland grazing" tax category. So long as the land use does not change, the land is taxed at the lower rates offered by these options, despite the inherent value of the land for some type of development.

Conservation Reserve Program—Created at the federal level, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency administers the "conservation reserve program". The CRP is a voluntary program that offers annual rental payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost-share assistance to establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The program encourages farmers to plant long-term resource-conserving covers to improve soil, water, and wildlife resources. While this is primarily an "ag lands" oriented program, it is not uncommon for the lands enrolled in it to be planted in trees, thereby helping establish more forest lands in the state.

Other USDA "Agricultural" Programs—Like those programs directed toward private forest landowners, other branches of the Department of Agriculture offer programs that are generally directed toward the owners of agricultural lands. However, those lands often include areas with trees and vegetative cover that would be eligible for inclusion in Idaho's Forest Legacy Program. These programs include (in addition to the CRP), the "Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) designed to protect water quality and the Forestry Incentives Program that provides cost-share assistance to landowners who plant trees and implement other forest management practices.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)—This federal act provides funds to regional "joint venture" organizations that provides and administers grants for various wetland projects. In north Idaho, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Kootenai Tribe was awarded a $1 million grant for wetland protection in the Kootenai River Valley, that includes conservation easements as well as land acquisition and restoration projects.

In addition to the Idaho Department of Lands, which has most of the statutory authority for administering programs that assist private forest landowners, other state and federal agencies play important roles in administering the programs described above.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—In addition to administering the National Wildlife Refuge System and other wildlife lands, the USFWS administers the Endangered Species Act as it pertains to resident fish and wildlife. USFWS reviews and comments on land use activities that affect fish and wildlife resources such as timber harvest rules, stream alteration proposals, dredging and filling in wetlands and hydroelectric projects.

Natural Resource Conservation Service—*The* NRCS provides technical support to the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) with distribution of federal cost-share monies associated with reducing soil erosion and increasing agricultural production on privately owned land. They provide engineering and technical support for land and water resource development, protection and restoration projects.

Individual Soil Conservation Districts—In Idaho, the state's 51 soil conservation districts are a unique unit of local government that promote clean water, productive soils and a healthy

environment by assisting rural landowners with conservation projects7. Districts conduct projects that demonstrate NPS pollution control practices, preferring voluntary, educational, and incentive-based approaches over regulatory approaches. Additionally, district boards work with state and federal regulatory agencies (for the most part, the Idaho Division of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) to identify problem areas and prioritize treatment. Conservation districts often draw people and resources together to catalyze or assist in the development of watershed planning efforts. Conservation districts sponsor many stream restoration projects, conduct landowner workshops, produce and distribute informational and educational materials, and hold demonstrations and tours of innovative riparian management techniques and projects.

Privately Supported Programs

Private and Non-Profit Organizations—The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands, the Conservation Fund and numerous smaller land trusts are qualified under Idaho law to hold perpetual conservation easements for the purpose of protecting various environmental values. These same entities can also purchase land for conservation purposes and complete habitat restoration projects.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a non-profit land conservation organization that works to protect land for human well being and enjoyment, and to improve the quality of life in American communities. Founded in 1972, TPL's legal, real estate and financial specialists work with landowners, community groups, local businesses and government agencies to conserve land for watershed protection, scenic beauty and open space, recreation, habitat and a host of other public values. TPL has completed over 20 projects in Idaho – primarily focused on wildlife and fisheries habitat, Wild and Scenic River inholdings, historic ranches, and key inholdings in the National Forests. Major TPL programs in Idaho include:

- **Wild & Scenic Rivers** – TPL is working to identify and protect those private lands located within and proximal to designated Wild and Scenic Rivers that contain high conservation values which are at risk.
- **Forestland Protection** –TPL is working to acquire lands or easements on forestlands with significant public conservation and recreation values. These easements remove the development rights, allowing the forestlands to stay in production and private ownership.
- **Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce Trails** – TPL is actively working with partners to identify and protect private lands along designated National Historic Trails that contain high conservation values and are threatened with development.
- **Working Landscapes** – In addition to helping protect public open space, TPL also works with individual landowners to protect working landscapes, including agriculture lands such as farms, ranches and orchards; forestlands and woodlots.
- **Boise Foothills** – In partnership with the City of Boise and community supporters, TPL helped put a $10 million open space levy on the ballot for the surrounding 100,000 acre-Boise foothills. Voters approved the measure.

The Nature Conservancy began in 1951 and has since become the world's leading private international conservation organization in terms of number of members, dollars raised, and acres protected. The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to "preserve plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need

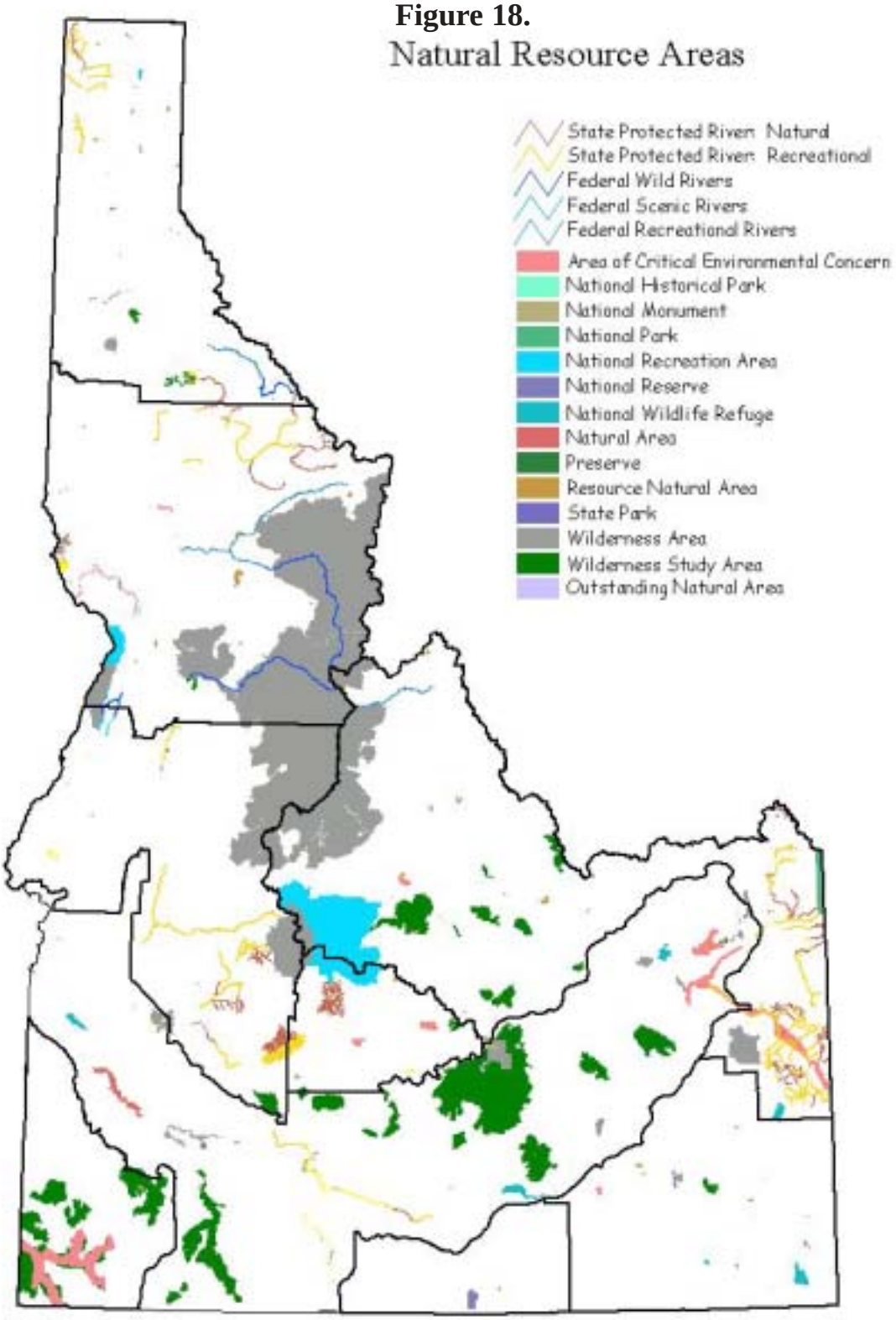
to survive." The Idaho chapter is the largest conservation organization in the state. It has conserved over 220,000 acres and manages 22 preserves. The Conservancy protects land through acquisition, gifts, exchanges, conservation easements, management agreements and partnerships. The Nature Conservancy works with a variety of partners to accomplish conservation including farmers, ranchers, businesses, community leaders, government agencies and other conservation organizations and pays taxes on all the land it owns.

Figure 20 illustrates the success of various land protection efforts in Idaho. This map shows the areas of private and federal lands, plus stream systems, that are essentially protected from most development. These include federal wilderness areas, parks, recreational areas, wild and scenic rivers, state designated natural and recreational rivers and various other land classifications that may preclude development.

Implications for the Forest Legacy Program

Given the number of agencies and programs directed toward the private forest landowner in Idaho, one might be tempted to question the need for the Forest Legacy Program. It is important to note that the Legacy Program offers a solely unique incentive to landowners—a way for them to capture the value of their lands for development while still maintaining their lands as forests. With this assurance, then landowners are well positioned and should be encouraged to take advantage of other programs that will help them better manage their forestlands.

Figure 18.


Natural Resource Areas
State Protected River: Natural
State Protected River: Recreational
Federal Wild Rivers
Federal Scenic Rivers
Federal Recreational Rivers
Area of Critical Environmental Concern
National Historical Park
National Monument
National Park
National Recreation Area
National Reserve
National Wildlife Refuge
Natural Area
Preserve
Resource Natural Area
State Park
Wilderness Area
Wilderness Study Area
Outstanding Natural Area

Idaho's Forest Legacy Program

Idaho's Forest Legacy Program reflects the broad goals of the national program by recognizing that in order to protect all forest values and the benefits that society derives from forested lands, it is first necessary to maintain those lands as forests. Inherent in Congress's authorization of the Forest Legacy Program is the recognition that most forested lands in the United States are held by private landowners and that those landowners face growing financial pressure to convert those lands to uses that will forever remove them from the forested land base. Most of those pressures arise from the demand for these lands for residential and commercial developments.

The situation is no different in Idaho, although it is perhaps not as pronounced as in more populated states nor has it persisted over as long a period. Nevertheless, a 28 percent increase in population for Idaho over the past ten years *(U.S. Census Bureau)* has had predictable results in terms of increased demand for new residences and increased values for forested lands as preferred areas for those new residences. This trend had been magnified in Idaho because well over two-thirds of the lands in the state are publicly owned and, therefore, not available for developments and because one of the great attractions to the state is the ability to live close to forested lands. As a result, some portions of the state, most notably the Boise Valley, eastern Idaho and the northern Panhandle have seen general increases in population with accompanying urbanization of nearby rural lands, while areas such as McCall, Driggs, Bonner and Kootenai Counties, and the outskirts of many rural communities have witnessed a large increase in the number of summer homes and recreational developments.

The Idaho State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee envisions that the Forest Legacy Program will help reduce the conversions of important forestlands to non-forest uses, specifically urban areas or rural home sites that would supplant the traditional uses of these lands. These lands include important economic and environmental forest values which will be irretrievably lost if the land use is changed. The essence of the program is that it will allow a one-time purchase of the "developmental rights" on private lands by the State of Idaho. The nature of the rights that the landowner is willing to forego will be negotiated for each easement. For example, an individual landowner may be willing to sell all rights to all future residential development, while another may retain the right to build two or three homes on larger acreages, but forego the right to higher densities of houses. Either would be permissible under the program, but the price paid for the greater limitation on development will be higher than if the landowner chooses to retain some limited development rights. Once the easement is agreed upon and closed, the Idaho Department of Lands will be responsible for assuring that the terms of the easement are met. Through such arrangements, landowners can derive both immediate financial benefits and be confident, along with the public that the lands thus enrolled in the program will remain as forests in perpetuity.

Within the broad context of maintaining forested landscapes, the committee has identified specific goals and program objectives for Idaho's program. The goals of the Forest Legacy Program in Idaho include:

- Identify important forestlands and reduce conversions of them that would be inconsistent with traditional uses,
- Maintain forest sustainability and the historic uses of forested lands,
- Assist in maintaining the culture and economies of rural communities through maintaining "working" forest landscapes,

- Conserve and enhance water quality and water quantities associated with forested landscapes,
- Maintain riparian and wetland areas, and,
- Conserve and enhance wildlife habitat and maintain habitat connectivity within forested landscapes.

These are the long-range goals of Idaho's Forest Legacy Program. Continued and effective implementation of the Program will, over a period of years, result in their achievement. On a less extensive basis, however, it is important to develop specific objectives for the short term to assure progress in meeting the long-term goals. Toward this end, the Committee has identified these program objectives:

1. Focus efforts where large areas of private forestland face near-term threats of conversion to non-forest uses and where the consequences of the associated losses to important ecological, social and economic benefit from those lands are significant.

2. Encourage private landowners to work with communities, agencies, businesses and other organizations to strengthen their management of forest resources.

3. Secure additional conservation investments in private forestland.

Idaho's State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee will have an important role in providing oversight and advice for implementing this program. This committee, already in existence in the state and established by through various federal statutes that authorize federal assistance to state private forestry programs, includes representatives of state and federal agencies as well as important interest groups (note Figure 19). For the purposes of the Legacy Program, this committee will likely be augmented by those who can represent county elected officials, realtors, plus other landowner and conservation organizations to assure a sufficiently broad perspective.

Figure 19. Idaho's State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee

Name	Affiliation	Location
Suzanne Audet	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Spokane, WA
Yvonne Barkley	U of I College of Natural Resources	Moscow, ID
Walt Bodine	Pheasants Forever, Inc.	Nampa, ID
Randy Brooks	Clearwater County Extension	Orofino, ID
Dave Brown	Kootenai Soil Conservation Dist.	Coeur d'Alene, ID
Betty and Max Cooper	Forest Landowner	Idaho Falls, ID
Vincent Carrao	Northwest Forest Management	Moscow, ID
John DeGroot	Nez Perce Tribe	Lapwai, ID
Frank Gariglio III	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Lewiston, ID
Kim Golden	Panhandle Lakes RC&D	Coeur d'Alene, ID
Jane Gorsuch	Intermountain Forestry Association	Boise, ID
Jean Greear	USDA Farm Service Agency	Boise, ID
KJ Hackworthy-Torgerson	The Nature Conservancy	Coeur d'Alene, ID
Gordon Harnasch	Kootenai County Assessor's Office	Coeur d'Alene, ID
Tom Hemker	Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game	Boise, ID
Isaac Henry	USDA Farm Service Agency	Coeur d'Alene, ID
Alex Irby	Clearwater Soil Conservation District	Orofino, ID
Be Kucinski	Idaho Tree Farm Committee	Coeur d'Alene, ID
Don Larson	Clearwater RC&D	Troy, ID
William Lukens	Forest Landowner	Sandpoint, ID
Ron Mahoney	U of I College of Natural Resources	Moscow, ID
Betty Munis	Idaho Forest Products Commission	Boise, ID
Dan Ogle	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Boise, ID
Arleen Pence	Idaho Forest Owners Association	Moscow, ID
Daniel Pierce	Clearwater RC&D	Moscow, ID
Sonny Poirier	Forest Landowner	Blanchard, ID
Peggy Polichio	U.S. Forest Service	Coeur d'Alene, ID
Glenn Roloff	U.S. Forest Service	Missoula, MT
Anders and Deb Rosenlund	Forest Landowner	Kingston, ID
Chris Schnepf	U of I College of Natural Resources	Coeur d'Alene, ID
Dee Sessions	U.S. Forest Service	Ogden, Utah
Jeff Stewart	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Sandpoint, ID
Mike Wolcott	Inland Forest Management	Sandpoint, ID
Kirk David, Chair	Idaho Department of Lands	Coeur d'Alene, ID

Eligibility Criteria and Priorities for Idaho's Forest Legacy Areas

Legislative authorities for the Forest Legacy Program direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish eligibility criteria for the designation of specific forest legacy areas in each state. As a result, there is a general national guidance for each Legacy area —"forest lands with significant environmental and resource based values".

There is other guidance that specifies that "important forest areas" shall contain one or more of the following important public values, as defined in each state:

1. Scenic resources,
2. Public recreation opportunities,
3. Riparian areas and wetlands,
4. Fish and wildlife habitat,
5. Known threatened and endangered species,
6. Known cultural resources,
7. Other ecological values; and/or
8. Opportunities for the continuation of traditional forest uses, such as forest management, timber harvesting, other commodity use, and outdoor recreation, as defined in the Assessment of Need.

While the foregoing guidance is useful and, indeed, necessary to the implementation of the authorizing legislation, it is somewhat unique in the latitude it gives the states to create forest legacy areas tailored to that state's needs. Such terms as "environmentally important", "threatened" and even "forested areas" are left to the discretion of each state's committee, as is the determination of "traditional forest uses". Given this latitude, here is Idaho's approach to defining these important terms and for establishing the state's criteria for individual forest legacy areas.

First, the Committee limits the concept of "threats" to private forest lands as those posed by, first, demands for this land for low-density rural residences, usually for second homes or new residences and, second, urbanization of private forestlands that are adjacent to major population centers. Idaho's Forest Legacy Program is not designed to arrest this trend or to impinge upon the rights of private landowners to sell or manage their lands, as they may desire. Neither will it provide an avenue for any state agency to directly manage private lands. It will, however, provide a tool for willing landowners who need the revenue that development of their lands would provide, but who might also prefer that their land continue to provide the values for which it has been traditionally managed.

Second, the Committee has considered the list of potential forest values cited in the legislation that authorizes the Forest Legacy Program as noted in the foregoing paragraphs and has chosen to focus on five of them. These include timber growth and lumber industry employment, dispersed recreational use and tourism and the number of "threatened", "endangered" and "candidate" species. In the Committee's view, these provide a suitable mix of economic and environmental measures, as well as surrogates for other, perhaps less definable, values. For example, if, through the Forest Legacy Program, it is possible to protect important habitat for aquatic species listed under the ESA, then it can probably be safely assumed that riparian habitats are also being protected.

Third, Idaho's unique geophysical features, climate and vegetation make the flexibility of the Forest Legacy Program important. The definition of "forests", for example, is sufficiently broad in Idaho's program to include the dense cedar-hemlock forests of the Panhandle to the sagebrush-lodgepole or Ponderosa pine types of southern Idaho to the pinyon-juniper forests associated with Idaho's high

desert. Idaho's Committee has chosen to use the broad definition of "forests" (as shown in figure 1) and coupled it with non-federal ownerships of these lands as defined in the Idaho "Forest Survey" work as a basis to establish Idaho's Forest Legacy Areas.

Finally, in order to concentrate on landscapes where the entire spectrum of forest values is likely to be the highest, the committee has determined that Idaho's Forest Legacy Areas will include only those counties with over 10,000 acres of non-federal forestlands and those portions of counties where there is a significant ownership of private lands that has forest vegetation on it. While "non-federal" ownerships include state lands that are ineligible for inclusion in the Forest Legacy Program, there are differing definitions of "private forest lands" and insufficient data at the county level on private ownership of forestlands (as the Committee has chosen to define "forests") to allow some level of private forestland ownership to be the determinant for inclusion in the Forest Legacy Program. As a result, the committee will use the "non-federal" ownership, which it believes to be reliable, as the initial determining factor for eligibility in the Program. The Committee does understand that state-owned lands are not eligible for inclusion in the Forest Legacy Program.

This means that nine counties, all in south Idaho and all with very little non-federal forested land will not be included in Idaho's Forest Legacy Program: Payette, Gem, Ada, Canyon, Gooding, Lincoln, Minidoka, Jerome and Jefferson. In addition to these nine counties, there are other large portions of adjoining counties where there is generally no forest vegetation. These areas generally coincide with the boundaries of the Snake River Plain Aquifer, a relatively well-defined geologic region of the state that parallels either side of the Snake River. The area within the aquifer, which includes portions of Washington, Twin Falls, Elmore, Owyhee, Cassia, Blaine, Power, Bingham, Bonneville, Butte, Madison, Fremont and Clark counties, are also excluded. Finally, additional parts of eastern Owyhee County and western Twin Falls County that are outside the Snake River Plain Aquifer but which do not have forest vegetation are also excluded from the Legacy areas.

Other large areas with no forested vegetation exist throughout the state. Generally, these are valley bottoms, where forest types resume on the adjoining hills. While it is possible to define and exclude such areas, the Committee notes that many private ownerships in these areas include not only lands in the valley bottoms with no forests but also uplands where there are valuable forest types. To exclude the valleys would add an unnecessary element of confusion for landowners with forested uplands who might want to participate in the program. Finally, it is conceivable that a significant, otherwise qualified project could be developed in one of these nine counties or the additional excluded areas. If that were ever the case, the Committee would urge the applicant to submit the proposal and, if it is approved, then the Committee will seek a modification of the Forest Legacy Program in Idaho to include such a project. Figure 20 identifies Idaho's qualified Forest Legacy Areas, which include:

"Northern Panhandle" Area—Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Shoshone and Benewah counties,

"Central" Area—Latah, Clearwater, Lewis, Nez Perce and Idaho counties,

"Southwest" Area—Adams, Valley, portions of Washington, Elmore and western Owyhee, plus all of Boise counties,

"South Central" Area—Portions of Blaine, Cassia, eastern Twin Falls counties, and all of Camas County,

"Southeast" Area—Portions of Power and Bingham Counties, plus all of Oneida, Franklin, Bear Lake, Caribou, and Bannock counties, and,

"Northeast" Area—All of Lemhi, Custer and Teton Counties, plus portions of Butte, Clark, Fremont, Madison, and Bonneville counties.

There are threats to private forestlands as defined by the Committee in each of the Legacy Areas. While the Committee recognizes that the levels of threats vary in each of the Legacy Areas, it does not view the level of these threats in any single Legacy Area as so insignificant as to further disqualify it from the Forest Legacy Program. Therefore, the Committee limits its exclusions from the Program to only those counties or portions of counties with little non-federal forestlands. For the remaining qualified counties or portions thereof, the Committee recognizes the variability of threats and forestland values by using that variability to set priorities among the six forest legacy areas. The resulting priority for each area will then become one of the criteria that will help the Committee choose between competing legacy projects. As discussed previously, the criteria that the Committee has used in setting priorities for the Legacy Areas include:

- ***Development pressures***, including population growth and measures that reflect conversions of forested lands in each area,

- ***Forest values***, such as timber productivity, numbers of threatened or endangered species, and recreational use, and,

- ***Economic values***, such as timber industry employment or tourism receipts.

Table 12 summarizes these values for each of Idaho's Forest Legacy Areas, as defined by the Committee. The values in the table were added to yield a composite "Legacy Area Priority Score", as indicated in the far right column. Through this analysis, the Northeast Area had the highest score and will be the highest priority area for developing and implementing individual projects. The priorities for Idaho's Forest Legacy Areas is as follows:

First Priority—Northeast
Second Priority—Northern Panhandle
Third Priority—Southwest
Fourth Priority—South Central
Fifth Priority—Southeast
Sixth Priority—Central

Establishing these priorities for each of the Forest Legacy Areas in the state does not mean that projects in a lower priority area will have little chance of being accepted. The "area priority" is simply a way to help the Committee choose between competing projects of otherwise equal worth. If that were the case, then the project in the area with a higher priority would be recommended over the project in a lower priority area. Thus, the area priority becomes one of many criteria by which the Committee will review and judge individual project proposals.

Table 12. Summary of Measures to Establish Priorities for Idaho Legacy Areas

Legacy Area	Acres of Private Forestland x10,000	% Population Change, 1990-2000	Total New Rural Residences per 1,000 Ac. of Priv. Forestland,1990-2001	Timber Growth (BF) Per Acre x 10	# of T&E, Candidate Species	Area of "Very High", "High" Dispersed Recreation x 10,000	% Increase in Lodging Sales, 1993-2001	# of "Lumber" Employees x 100	Legacy Area Priority Score
Northern Panhandle	14	41	6	28	10	27	22	43	191
Central	13	11	1	22	13	32	-3	23	112
Southwest	4	32	6	21	15	60	33	7	178
South Central	1	21	58	11	10	22	35	0	158
Southeast	3	13	21	11	5	21	48	0	122
Northeast	1	15	58	10	9	49	54	0	196

Criteria for Reviewing Individual Project Proposals

The criteria for evaluating each legacy project proposal generally reflect those for establishing and setting the priorities for each Forest Legacy Area. First of all, each project must include forested lands (given the chosen broad definition of forests) and it must include only privately owned forestland. Beyond that, the Committee foresees applying the following general criteria to reviewing each project proposal and for assigning it a priority for final approval and funding.

***Size*—**Is the project of sufficient size to "matter" in terms of meeting Idaho's goals and program objectives?
***Connectivity*—**Will the project add protected lands to other lands already protected, thus creating a larger area or is the project geographically isolated?
***Contribution to local economies*—**If the project lands are protected, will there be additional or maintained contributions to local economies?
***Contribution to environmental and cultural values*—**What is the magnitude of fish, wildlife, scenic, cultural, watershed and other environmental or cultural values that will be protected if the project is approved?
***Threats*—**What is the scope and immediacy of threats to the continued existence of the project land as a forest?
***Alternative protection methods*—**Does the land qualify for range or farmland protection programs or can the same environmental values be obtained through such an alternative as a "habitat conservation plan"?
***Support*—**What is the level of public support, as indicated by availability of matching funds, partners for the project and local support for it?
***Legacy Area Priority*—**What is the priority of the Forest Legacy Area in which the project is located?

While the adoption of formal review procedures will be left to the full State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee, the subcommittee preparing this Assessment of Need envisions that Committee members will rate individual project proposals independently. They will arrive at a score based on the applicants responses to the criteria listed above. Most of the information will be provided through the proposal itself, while the Committee will answer some of the questions. For example, it will be up to the Committee to assess the value of the "connectivity" of the project in question with other protected areas. To help answer such questions, the Committee may use agency and private information such as The Nature Conservancy's eco-regional planning data that can help determine if a proposed project is adjacent to other protected areas or includes particularly significant habitat or wildlife values. Those projects with the highest scores will receive top priority for funds as they become available.

Program Implementation and Administration

In Idaho, the Forest Legacy Program will be new, and, as such, an addition to agency workloads of an underdetermined magnitude. At the present time, the general mechanism for implementing the Forest Legacy Program in other states is through the state forestry agency, under the general direction of the USDA Forest Service's State and Private Forestry branch and with the guidance of the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee. This will be Idaho's approach to program administration as well, although the Committee and the Department of Lands will seek technical and other advice from such agencies as the Department of Fish and Game and such organizations as the Idaho Association of Counties or various industry or conservation organizations.

Rather than attempt to foresee and define all the steps to fully developing and implementing the Forest Legacy Program in Idaho, the Committee has chosen to defer some of the details of this work until the Assessment of Need has been approved. At that time, the Committee recognizes that much is to be done before the Program can be fully operational. Following is a summary of what that work might include.

Program Funding—Ongoing funding for the program will be an issue for the Department of Lands. Even though some of the costs of developing the program are supported through federal funds, there is no guarantee that future federal funds will be available. The costs of supporting the Committee's work to review and recommend projects and for assuring that the provisions of the various easements approved and closed are adhered to must be borne by the Department. Moreover, these costs will increase each year, if only because the task of monitoring compliance with Forest Legacy easements will increase by the new ones approved each year. Since these easements must be maintained and will be held by the state in perpetuity, this part of the Program could grow quite large.

Stewardship Plans—Each Forest Legacy project must be accompanied by a "forest stewardship plan". At a minimum, the management plan must convey how the landowner will continue to provide or protect the forest values that would be eliminated if the lands were not enrolled in the Forest Legacy Program. It will likely need to include appropriate maps and data to define the forest values to be protected and the terms of the easement that will protect them. The Committee will need to develop the content and standards to be met in each for these plans.

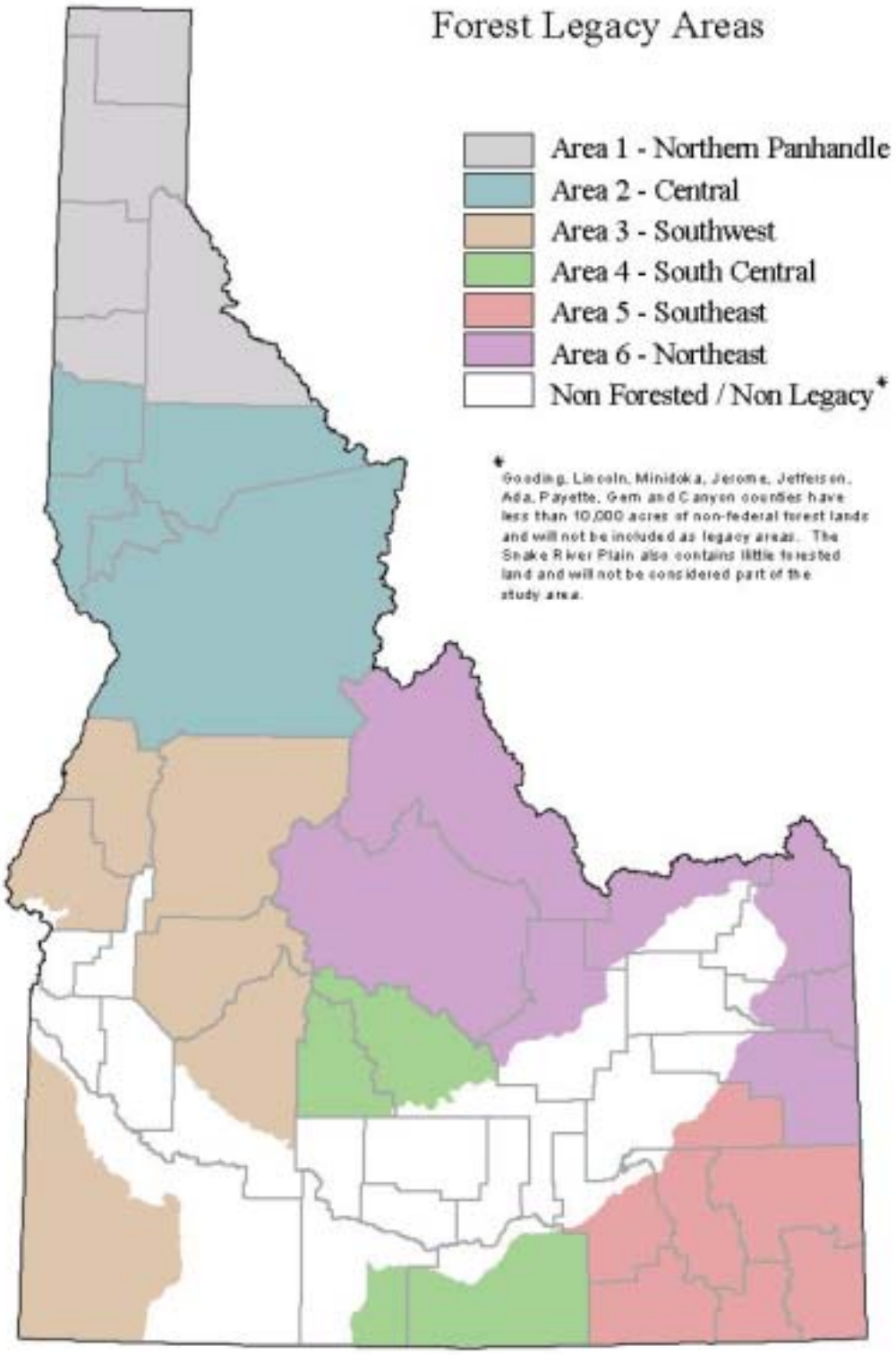
Project Evaluation—While the foregoing criteria will likely be the basis for evaluating each Forest Legacy project proposal, how each is to be weighted and assessed is still a question that the Committee will need to fully answer. One likely approach might be a system that allows the Committee to review the criteria and rank them to develop a "score" for each project, but, again, the details of that await further refinement.

Program Promotion—If the Program is to meet the goals the Committee has set for it, then it must be promoted within the state and to those whom might take advantage of it so there is a pool of quality proposals for the Committee to consider. This implies a public education program to inform landowners, landowner groups, the forest industry, forestry consultants, realtors and conservation groups about the program and solicit proposals. Toward that end, the Committee may want to consider developing a brochure or similar print material.

"Frequently Asked Questions"—As part of promoting the program, it might be useful for the Committee to develop information that constitutes "full disclosure" of the implications of conservation easements so that landowners better understand them. This might be viewed as the "legal fine print", but a number of the public comments highlighted the need to make sure that landowners fully comprehend the nature of permanent easements and what may be included in them. Similar information might include how the Department will monitor the easements and how to obtain assistance in developing a project proposal or in negotiating an easement.

Professional Assistance—The Committee will likely need to develop relationships with legal counsel, title companies and consultants who can both assist landowners who would like to propose a project and who can negotiate and close them once they are developed.

Figure 20.


Forest Legacy Areas
Area 1 - Northern Panhandle
Area 2 - Central
Area 3 - Southwest
Area 4 - South Central
Area 5 - Southeast
Area 6 - Northeast
Non Forested / Non Legacy*
* Gooding, Lincoln, Minidoka, Jerome, Jefferson, Ada, Payette, Gem and Canyon counties have less than 10,000 acres of non-federal forest lands and will not be included as legacy areas. The Snake River Plain also contains little forested land and will not be considered part of the study area.

Idaho's Forest Legacy Areas

Each of Idaho's Forest Legacy Areas includes at least some of the public values cited as necessary for approval as a "forest legacy area": scenic resources, public recreation opportunities, riparian areas, fish and wildlife habitat, threatened or endangered species, cultural resources, or the opportunity for continued traditional forest uses. While probably all of these values exist in each of Idaho's proposed areas, they may take on entirely different flavors, dependent upon the geophysical and ecological character of the area. For example, the values associated with the cool, moist forests of the Northern Panhandle contrast greatly with those of the basalt canyons, scattered trees and sagebrush of the Southwest Area. For a general description of each of Idaho's Forest Legacy Areas, the Subcommittee has relied on the descriptions included in the state's "Official Travel Planner".

Finally, each forest legacy area includes lands where there is a threat that developmental pressures will irretrievably convert forestlands to other uses. Here, again, the scope and magnitude of the threats may vary from the urban sprawl that is quickly surrounding Coeur d'Alene to the five acre "ranchettes" in Teton County.

Northern Panhandle*—When entering Northern Idaho, it doesn't take long to catch a glimpse of the blue water. The area has the greatest concentration of lakes of any western state. Some are large and deep while others are remote, but all are framed by dense forests, mountains and lush valleys. The region includes three major natural lakes—Priest, Pend Oreille and Coeur d'Alene—and is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts of all types (excerpted from Idaho's Official Travel Planner, Idaho Dept. of Commerce).*

Certainly the most heavily forested region of the state, the Northern Panhandle has a long history of economic reliance on the timber industry, but a growing tourism and recreation industry. It is also one of the fastest growing areas in the state, with population increases of over 40 percent over the past decade. Consequently, there have been major changes from forested lands to rural home sites and urban expansion, particularly around Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint.

Table 13. Lumber Employment, Northern Panhandle, 1996-2000

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Boundary	549	661	618	588	569
Bonner 1,038	981	986	1,057	961	
Kootenai	2,018	1,913	1,826	1,836	1,824
Shoshone		130	116	109	110
Benewah	985	993	918	814	805
Total	***4,590***	***4,678***	***4,464***	***4,404***	***4,269***

(Source: Idaho Dept. of Labor)

Table 14. Change in Population, Northern Panhandle

	1990 Census Population	2000 Census Population	•1990-00 Population	•Percent 1990-00
Benewah	7,937	9,171	1,234	15.5%
Bonner	26,622	36,835	10,213	38.4%
Boundary	8,332	9,871	1,539	18.5%
Kootenai	69,795	108,685	38,890	55.7%
Shoshone	13,931	13,771	-160	-1.1%
Total	***126,617***	***178,333***	***51,716***	***40.80%***

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

An abundance of private lands in the Northern Panhandle accompany the abundant forests. While much of the forested area is in federal or state ownership, private lands predominate along the major transportation corridors and urban areas. Of the nearly 1.9 million acres of privately owned lands, three fourths of them are forested.

Table 15. Private Forest Ownerships, Northern Panhandle

County	Total Acres	Total Private Land	Private Forestland	Percent Private Land that is Forested
Benewah	496,640	385,250	280,249	73%
Bonner	1,112,064	440,780	334,265	76%
Boundary	812,032	208,056	124,297	60%
Kootenai	796,928	494,957	306,089	62%
Shoshone	1,685,760	370,066	390,529	106%
Total	4,903,424	1,899,109	1,435,429	76%

(Source: Id. Depts. of Commerce and Lands)

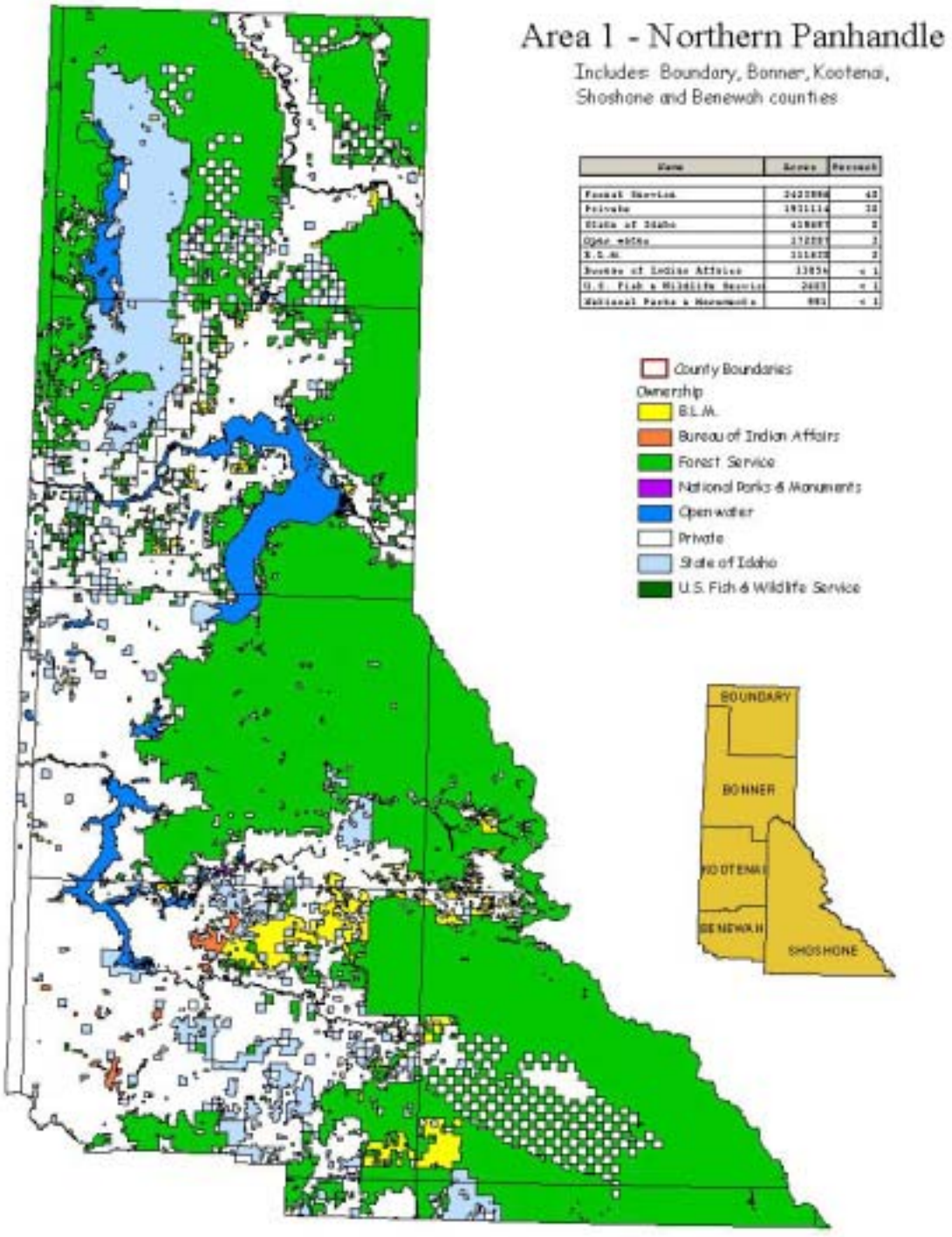
These lands support forests unique to Idaho. The cedar, hemlock, and white pine extend only through the northern third of the state and are reminiscent of coastal stands, a testament to the good growing sites and ample rainfall of the north. The dense nature of these forests also supports two of Idaho's largest and most elusive threatened and endangered species—grizzly bears and woodland caribou. Other species listed as threatened, endangered or candidates for listing are shown in Appendix III. There are no candidate or invertebrate species proposed or listed for the Northern Panhandle.

From a recreation standpoint, forested lands add to the ambience of the Northern Panhandle, which attracts a growing number of visitors to the area, even if they do not seek recreational opportunities in the forests. However, many of them do participate in recreational pursuits that are either directly related to the forests or made more enjoyable by them. These include fishing, big game hunting, mountain biking and hiking, as well as those that are more organized or commercial—tour boats on Coeur d'Alene Lake, for example.

Implementation of the Forest Legacy Program in the Northern Panhandle will help protect timber, recreation and wildlife values, particularly in the interface between the growing urban areas and the surrounding, generally higher elevation public lands. As such, the subcommittee envisions many projects that will connect the private lands with larger areas of state or federal lands. Important areas for the Legacy Program include those lands around Priest, Pend Oreille and Coeur d'Alene Lake, the

lower St. Joe corridor, and along major transportation routes. Two wildlife species—whitetail deer and black bear—would particularly benefit from protected habitat in the area around Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint that is rapidly being developed.

Figure 21. Land Ownership in the Northern Panhandle



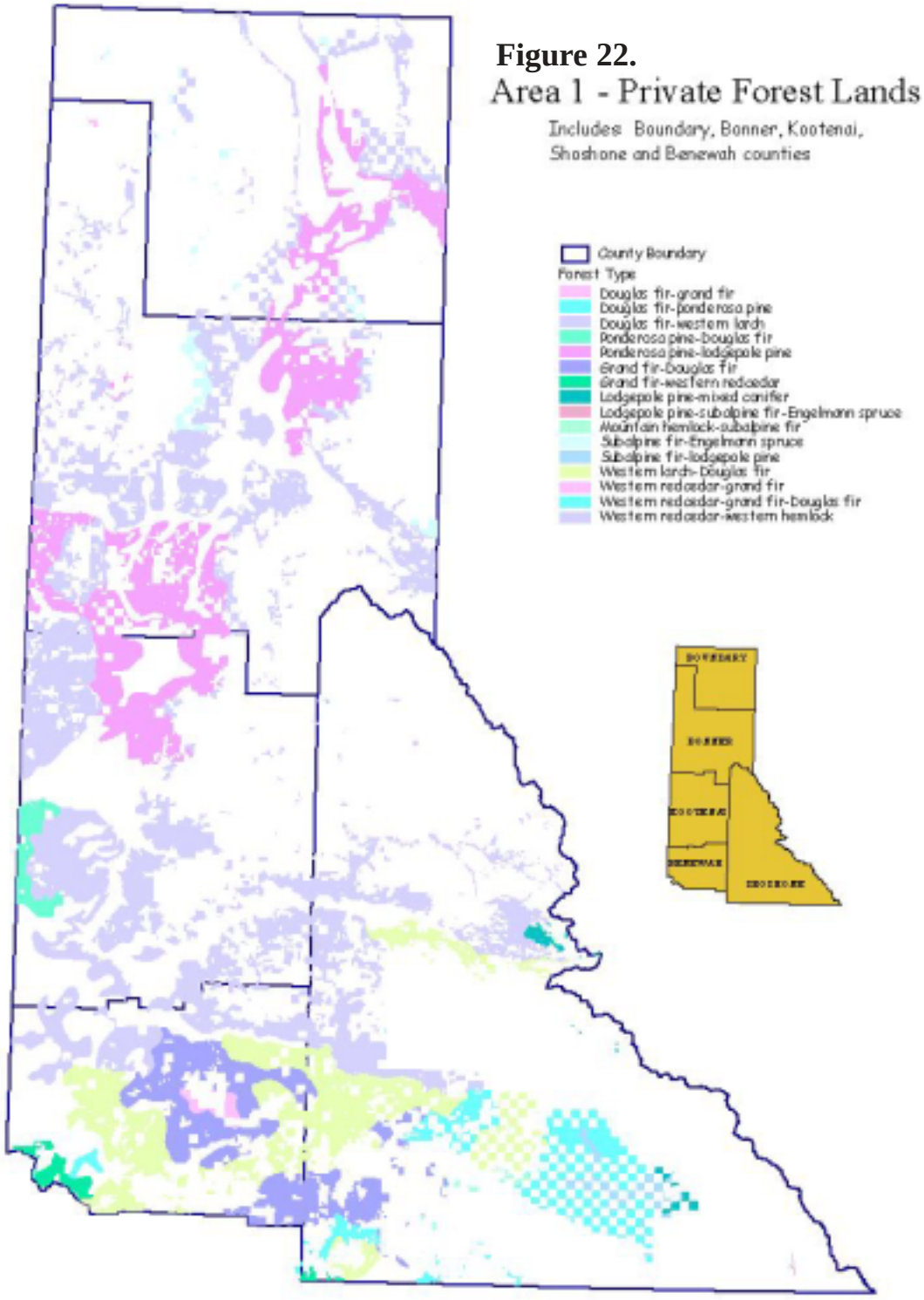

Area 1 - Private Forest Lands
Includes Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Shoshone and Benewah counties
County Boundary
Forest Type
Douglas fir-grand fir
Douglas fir-ponderosa pine
Douglas fir-western larch
Ponderosa pine-Douglas fir
Ponderosa pine-lodgepole pine
Grand fir-Douglas fir
Grand fir-western redcedar
Lodgepole pine-mixed conifer
Lodgepole pine-subalpine fir-Engelmann spruce
Mountain hemlock-subalpine fir
Subalpine fir-Engelmann spruce
Subalpine fir-lodgepole pine
Western larch-Douglas fir
Western redcedar-grand fir
Western redcedar-grand fir-Douglas fir
Western redcedar-western hemlock

Figure 22.

***Central**—North Central Idaho is quintessential Americana—rolling hills and grain fields and small towns. The Palouse is a sea of amber waves of wheat and barley. Beyond the fields, the landscape transforms into endless ridges of forests divided by clear rivers. It is the land of the Nez Perce and the last of America's colorful log drives down the Clearwater River. Finally, it is the land where Lewis and Clark first saw the Lochsa, Selway and the Snake Rivers (excerpted from Idaho's Official Travel Planner, Idaho Dept. of Commerce).*

This, too, is one of the areas traditionally heavily dependent upon the forest products industry, with Potlatch's large sawmill and paper complex in Lewiston, along with numbers of smaller, family-owned mills in the Clearwater Valley. While the area has not seen the population growth of north Idaho or the Boise Valley, there have been considerable recreational developments in the upper Clearwater Valley and around Moscow.

Table 16. Change in Population, Central Legacy Area

	1990 Census Population	2000 Census Population	•1990-00 Population	•Percent 1990-00
Clearwater	8,505	8,930	425	5.0%
Idaho	13,768	15,511	1,743	12.7%
Latah	30,617	34,935	4,318	14.1%
Lewis	3,516	3,747	231	6.6%
Nez Perce	33,754	37,410	3,656	10.8%
Total	***90,160***	***100,533***	***10,373***	***11.50%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 17. Lumber Employment, Central Legacy Area, 1996-2000

	1996	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**
Latah	469	474	464	489	481
Clearwater	789	787	739	689	640
Lewis	101	114	110	111	112
Nez Perce	659	674	609	591	590
Idaho	578	488	512	550	514
Total	***2,596***	***2,537***	***2,434***	***2,430***	***2,337***

Source: Idaho Dept. of Labor

From a private ownership standpoint, Central Idaho includes the largest industrial ownership in the state, but also an important amount of small, nonindustrial lands. Many of the private ownerships begin to show the characteristics of private lands across the remainder of the state—a mix of farm or rangelands with a component of timber or woodlands where soils and moisture conditions allow. Thus, timber ownerships include more timbered draws and ridges, with a heavy tree cover on north slopes and scattered or no trees where temperature and moisture is more limiting.

Table 18. Private Forest Ownerships, Central Area

	Total Lands	Total Private Lands	Private Forested Land	Percent Private Land that is Forested
Clearwater	1,575,424	496,662	439,389	88.5
Idaho	5,430,528	826,261	368,718	44.6
Latah	689,088	532,695	239,010	44.9
Lewis	306,624	291,922	96,013	32.9
Nez Perce	543,424	420,752	123,555	29.4
Total	***8,545,088***	***2,568,292***	***1,266,685***	***49.3***

(Source: Idaho Depts. Of Commerce and Lands)

Private forestlands in the Central area define the phrase "working forest landscapes". There is a long history of timber harvesting and actively managing these lands for timber production within the area. Two of the more unique features of the forestry practiced within this area is the intensive, high yield silviculture that is a hallmark of the industrial lands and the efforts of private and public landowners to bring back western white pine, decimated by blister rust and largely missing from the landscape, at least in the quantities present a century ago.

Big game hunting is perhaps the area's most popular recreational pursuit, and, while currently somewhat in decline, the Clearwater elk herd is among the country's largest. Deer, moose and bear also represent plentiful big game species. However, in addition, the area also supports numerous listed species, as indicated in Appendix III.

The combination of big game and outstanding fishing in the Selway, Clearwater, and Lochsa systems represents a large recreational resource for the Central Legacy Area. As a result, there is a noticeable increase in recreational residential development along the major river and transportation corridors, as well as around Moscow, Grangeville, Kamiah and Kooskia. Implementation of the Forest Legacy Program in this area would help protect timber values on lands where there is a long history of commercial forest management and along the important "breaklands" along the slopes and at the tops of the major river canyons.

Land Ownership in Central Idaho

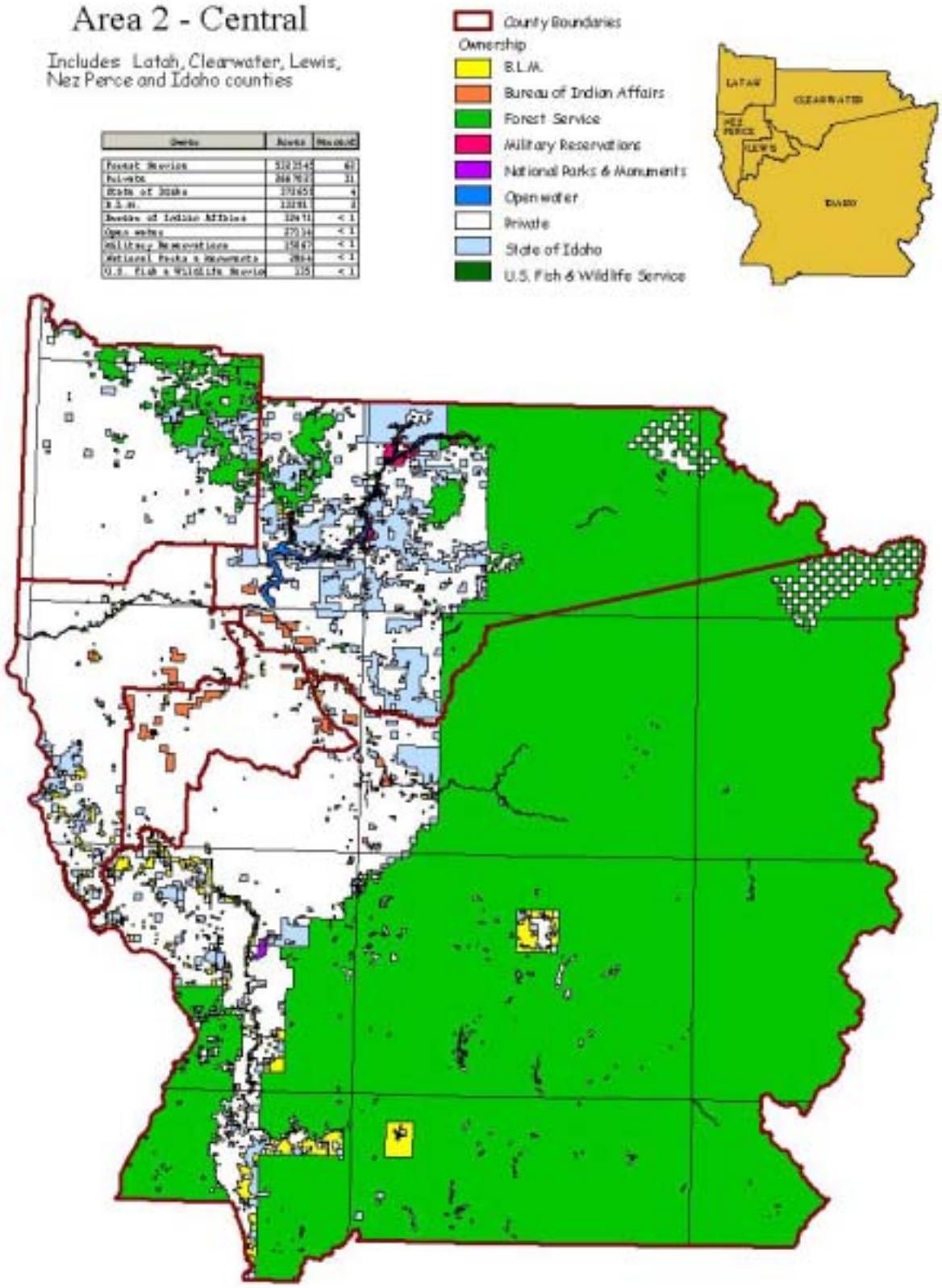
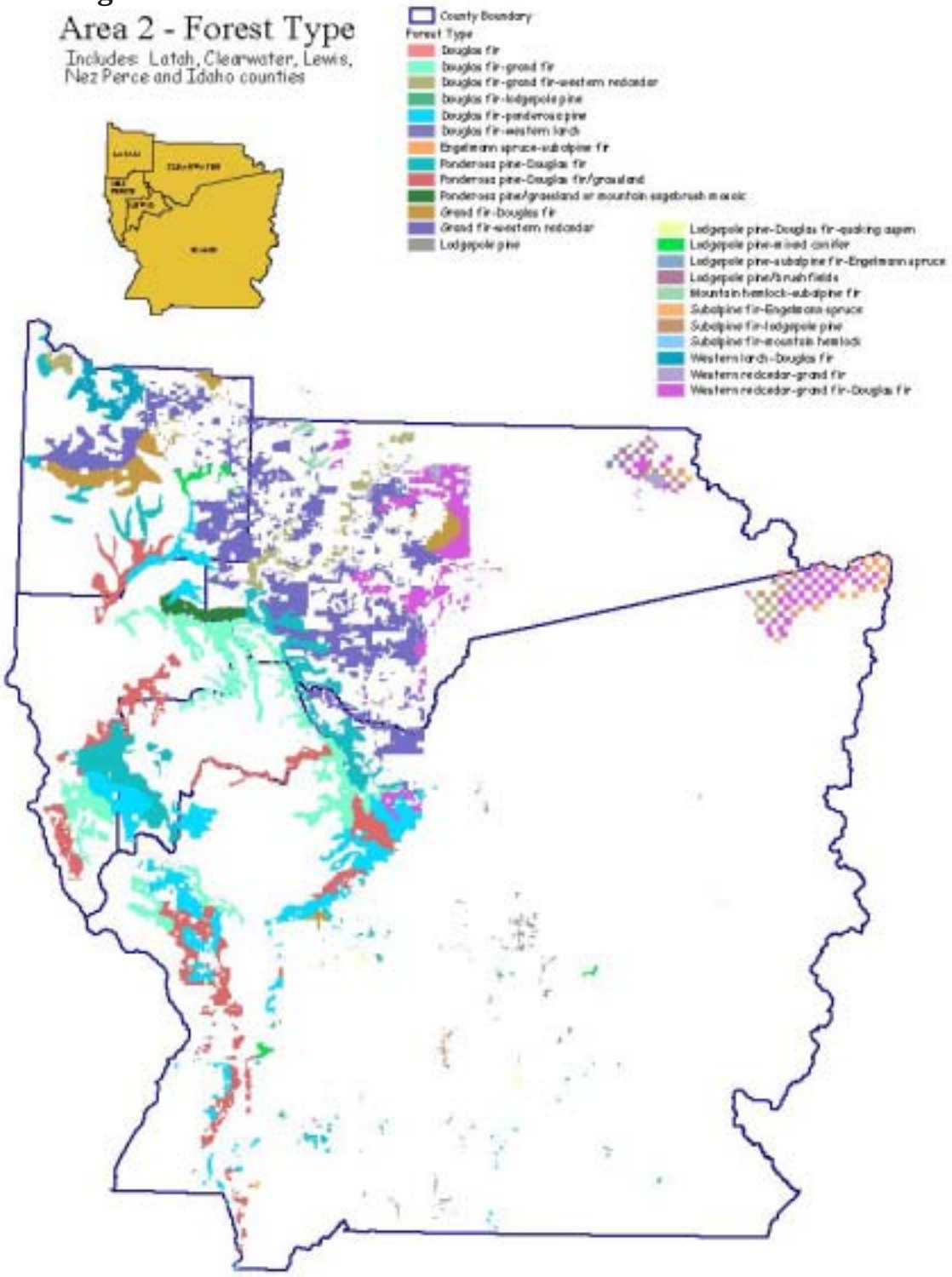


Figure 24.


Area 2 - Forest Type
Includes: Latah, Clearwater, Lewis, Nez Perce and Idaho counties
County Boundary
Forest Type
Douglas fir
Douglas fir-grand fir
Douglas fir-grand fir-western redcedar
Douglas fir-lodgepole pine
Douglas fir-ponderosa pine
Douglas fir-western larch
Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir
Ponderosa pine-Douglas fir
Ponderosa pine-Douglas fir/grassland
Ponderosa pine/grassland or mountain sagebrush mosaic
Grand fir-Douglas fir
Grand fir-western redcedar
Lodgepole pine
Lodgepole pine-Douglas fir-quaking aspen
Lodgepole pine-mixed conifer
Lodgepole pine-subalpine fir-Engelmann spruce
Lodgepole pine/brush fields
Mountain hemlock-subalpine fir
Subalpine fir-Engelmann spruce
Subalpine fir-lodgepole pine
Subalpine fir-mountain hemlock
Western larch-Douglas fir
Western redcedar-grand fir
Western redcedar-grand fir-Douglas fir

Southwest*—Southwestern Idaho is a study in contrasts. The region begins at the Nevada border with vast expanses of high desert, deep canyons where birds of prey soar and very few people, then transitions into the most populous portion of the state. At this point desert gives way to mountains, crystal clear rivers and pastoral agricultural valleys and great forests. People have been attracted to Southwestern Idaho for centuries. Indian Tribes would meet annually for a two-month trade fair and salmon bake. After gold and silver were discovered in the mountains, Idaho City became the largest city in the Pacific Northwest. Further south, high in the Owyhee Mountains, Silver City looks much the same as she did during the boom times, with over 70 intact buildings dotting the hillsides.*

The most popular attraction is North America's deepest river gorge, Hells Canyon. The Snake River makes up 70 miles of the Oregon-Idaho border in the 7000' deep chasm. Looking down upon the canyon are the mighty Seven Devils Mountains, an awe-inspiring range that rises 1-1/2 miles above the river, making it a chasm deeper than the Grand Canyon. Thirty alpine lakes nestled among the Seven Devils provide pristine havens for hiking, backpacking and horseback riding.

South of Boise, the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area is home to dozens of raptors that make their homes in the canyon's walls high above the river. The high country of Southwestern Idaho is idyllic Long Valley, nearly fifty miles of pastureland, forests and quaint towns, including McCall, a popular winter and summer resort and adjoining Payette Lake. South of McCall is twenty-mile long Cascade Lake and the town of Cascade. Well stocked with fish and surrounded by over 20 public and private recreation areas, Cascade is popular with anglers, boating enthusiasts, water skiers and those who enjoy camping under the stars.

Elmore County, east of Boise, offers a wealth of recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. Climb the 470-foot high sand dunes at Bruneau Dunes State Park, and then stay after dark to explore the heavens at the Bruneau Dunes Observatory. Enjoy boating and fishing at Anderson Ranch or C.J. Strike Reservoirs. In Glenn's Ferry, you can see what life was like on the Oregon Trail at the Three Island Crossing State Park interpretive center. Glenn's Ferry annually celebrates their pioneer history by reenacting the treacherous river crossing (excerpted from Idaho's Official Travel Planner, Idaho Dept. of Commerce).

Largely due to the growth in the Boise Valley, the Southwest Legacy Area has seen some of the greatest incursions of urban growth into rural areas. From Ada and Canyon Counties (not included as Legacy Areas), the additional people have created probably the largest pressures on private forested lands of any region in the state. The McCall-Cascade area has seen huge increases in recreational homes and communities, with more envisioned with the approval of the Westrock Resort.

Table 19. Change in Population, Southwest Legacy Area

	1990 Census Population	2000 Census Population	•1990-00 Population	•Percent 1990-00
Adams	3,254	3,476	222	6.8%
Valley	6,109	7,651	1,542	25.2%
Washington	8,550	9,977	1,427	16.7%
Boise	3,509	6,670	3,161	90.1%
Elmore	21,205	29,130	7,925	37.4%
Owyhee	8,392	10,644	2,252	26.8%
Total	***51,019***	***67,548***	***16,529***	***32.40%***

This is also the area of the state hardest hit with sawmill closures over the past decade, with mills in Emmett, Cascade, Boise, Council, Horseshoe Bend and Mountain Home all now permanently closed, leaving just one significant sawmill south of the Salmon River. While significant volumes of timber are still produced from the state, federal and private lands in Southwest Idaho, most of the logs are now sent to mills either in Eastern Oregon or Central Idaho.

Table 20. Lumber Employment, Southwest Area, 1996-2000

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Adams	244	224	196	177	178
Valley	340	123	118	121	129
Washington		326	375	408	287
Boise	136	120	96	66	67
Elmore		29	33	17	18
Owyhee					
Total	***720***	***822***	***818***	***789***	***679***

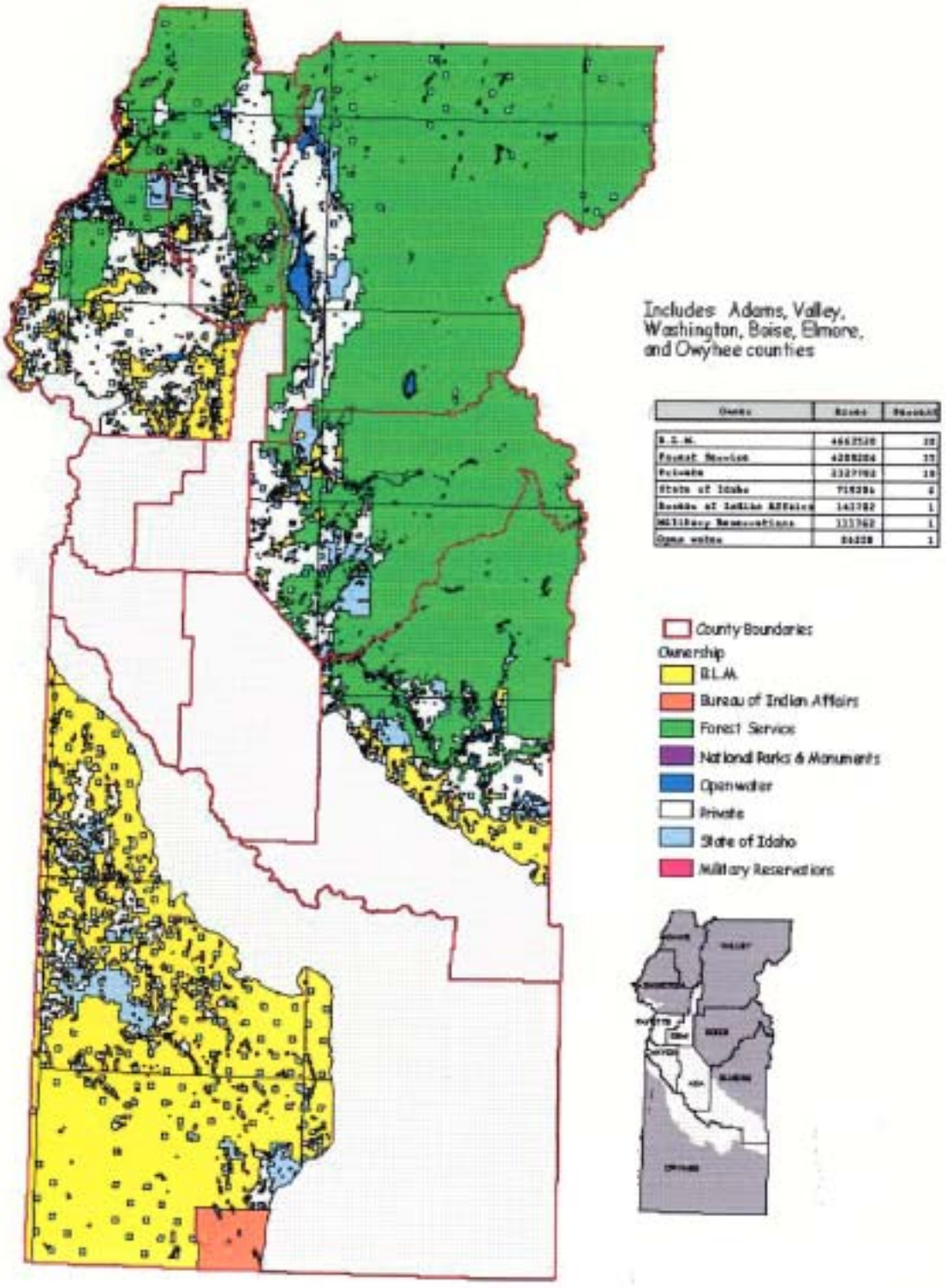
Source: Idaho Dept. of Labor

As is true for much of the rest of the state, the bulk of the private ownership is found in the lower elevations, particularly along transportation and major river corridors. Much of it is farmland, with forests and woodlands occupying only those areas where moisture and soil conditions are most favorable and where forested ownerships are usually part of larger ranch or farm operations.

Table 21. Private Forest Ownerships, Southwest Area

	Total Lands	Total Private Lands	Private Forested Land	Percent Private Land that is Forested
Adams	873,408	268,573	72,141	26.9
Boise	1,217,600	227,322	90,783	39.9
Elmore	1,969,792	522,354	14,203	2.7
Owyhee	4,914,176	857,838	68,536	8.0
Valley	2,354,048	221,151	134,144	60.7
Washington	932,096	511,815	7,135	1.4
Total	***12,261,120***	***2,609,053***	***386,942***	***14.8***

Figure 25. Land Ownership, Southwest Idaho



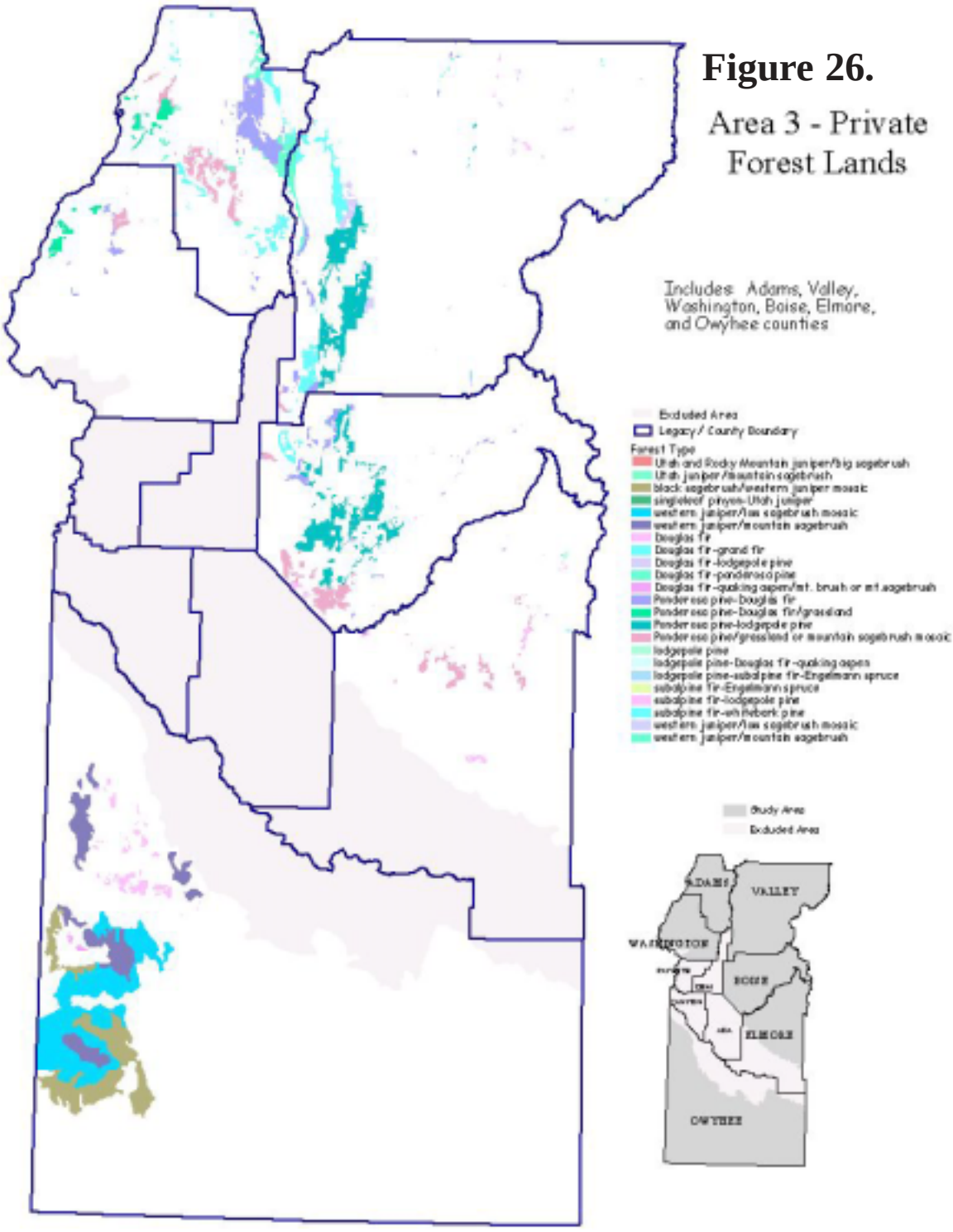


Figure 26.

Area 3 - Private Forest Lands

The varied forest and woodland types reflect the change in elevation and moisture from the relatively moist mountain areas around New Meadows and McCall to the arid, high deserts of Owyhee County. Timber species and types include Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, western larch and grand fir with scattered lodgepole and subalpine fir or spruce, while the drier sites may include scattered pines, Douglas-fir and an understory of sagebrush. Desert types may include junipers or pinyon pine as well as various woody shrubs.

Varied vegetative cover and elevations over short distances have created varied wildlife species and habitats. Bear, deer and elk are common and big game hunting is predictably popular. In the lower elevations, bird hunting for chukars and Hungarian partridges as well as forest grouse is equally popular. There is a wide variety of listed and candidate species, as indicated in Appendix III. The Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel is noteworthy in that the total population is small and much of it exists on private land where there are growing developmental pressures.

Given its proximity to Idaho's largest concentrations of people, the Southwest Legacy Area is quickly becoming a playground for those who live and work in the Boise Valley. One has to look no further than the growth in the number of recreational homes in the Cascade, McCall and New Meadows area to understand the impacts of the area's popularity in terms of expansion of urban areas and increases in rural residential areas.

The demise of the forest products industry in the area presents some challenges unique to the Southwest Area, with its history of fires. Many of the forests in the area are in need of thinning and prescribed burning to reduce fire hazards, and there is a commensurate reduction in fire hazards in these timber types from such treatments. The increases in rural residences in these timber types both increase the risk of wildfires and the potential for large monetary losses should they occur. Without mills to use the timber removed from thinning operations, however, completing this work can be prohibitively expensive.

Implementation of the Forest Legacy Program in Southwest Idaho will largely protect recreational values and fish and wildlife habitat. With only one mill in the area, maintaining "working forest landscapes" even though there is a substantial industrial forest ownership in southwest Idaho is likely not to be an achievable goal. However, preventing these lands from being developed will both maintain open space and public access to forested lands that is increasingly rare in the Cascade-McCall-New Meadows area, particularly.

South central—Mountains dominate the northern part of this Legacy area, which includes not only the hayfields of the Camas Prairie but also the resort communities of Sun Valley and Ketchum. To the south and past the agricultural communities of Twin Falls and Burley are the springs and falls along the Snake River Canyon and the Malad Gorge. Forests and mountains resume on the Nevada border with the southern extension of the Sawtooth National Forest and the City of Rocks Preserve.

The area around Sun Valley has certainly seen an expansion in recreational development, with virtually all the surrounding private lands commanding huge prices. Although the area has never had a history of sawmills and logging, the lodgepole and fir forests in the mountains have a rich tradition of sheep herding and mining. While population of the area has increased over 20 percent in the last decade, nearly 90 percent of that growth has be in the Sun Valley/Ketchum and Twin Falls areas.

Table 22. Change in Population, South Central Legacy Area

	1990 Census Population	2000 Census Population	•1990-00 Population	•Percent 1990-00
Camas	727	991	264	36.3%
Blaine	13,552	18,991	5,439	40.1%
Cassia	19,532	21,416	1,884	9.6%
Twin Falls	53,580	64,284	10,704	20.0%
Total	***87,391***	***105,682***	***18,291***	***20.9%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

There are significant ownerships of private forestlands within these counties, as shown in the following table. What is less clear is where the private forestlands are in relation to parks, ski areas and other attractions that would boost their value as developmental property. While virtually any private land in Blaine County is very valuable for rural residential development, the same values do not exist throughout the South Central Legacy Area. Lands close to the City of Rocks or Pomerelle Ski Area will undoubtedly see values rise, however.

Table 23. Private Forest Ownerships, South Central Area

	Total Lands	Total Private Lands	Private Forested Land	Percent Private Land that is Forested
Camas	688,000	214,981	11,658	5.4
Cassia	1,642,624	663,408	27,632	4.2
Twin Falls	1,232,064	558,124	12,163	2.2
Total	***3,562,688***	***1,436,513***	***51,453***	***3.6***

Source: Idaho Depts. Of Commerce and Lands

Figure 27. Land Ownership, South Central Idaho

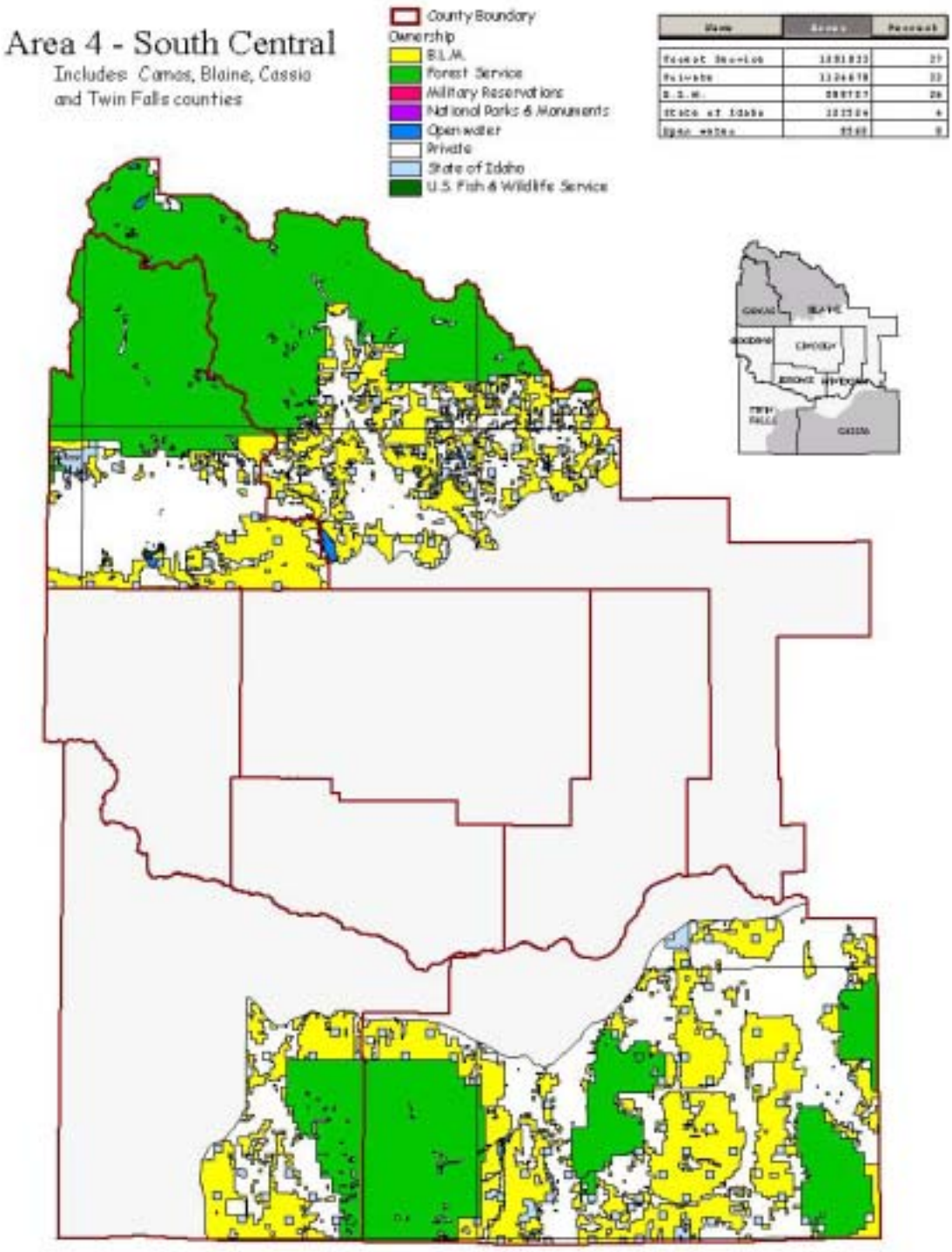
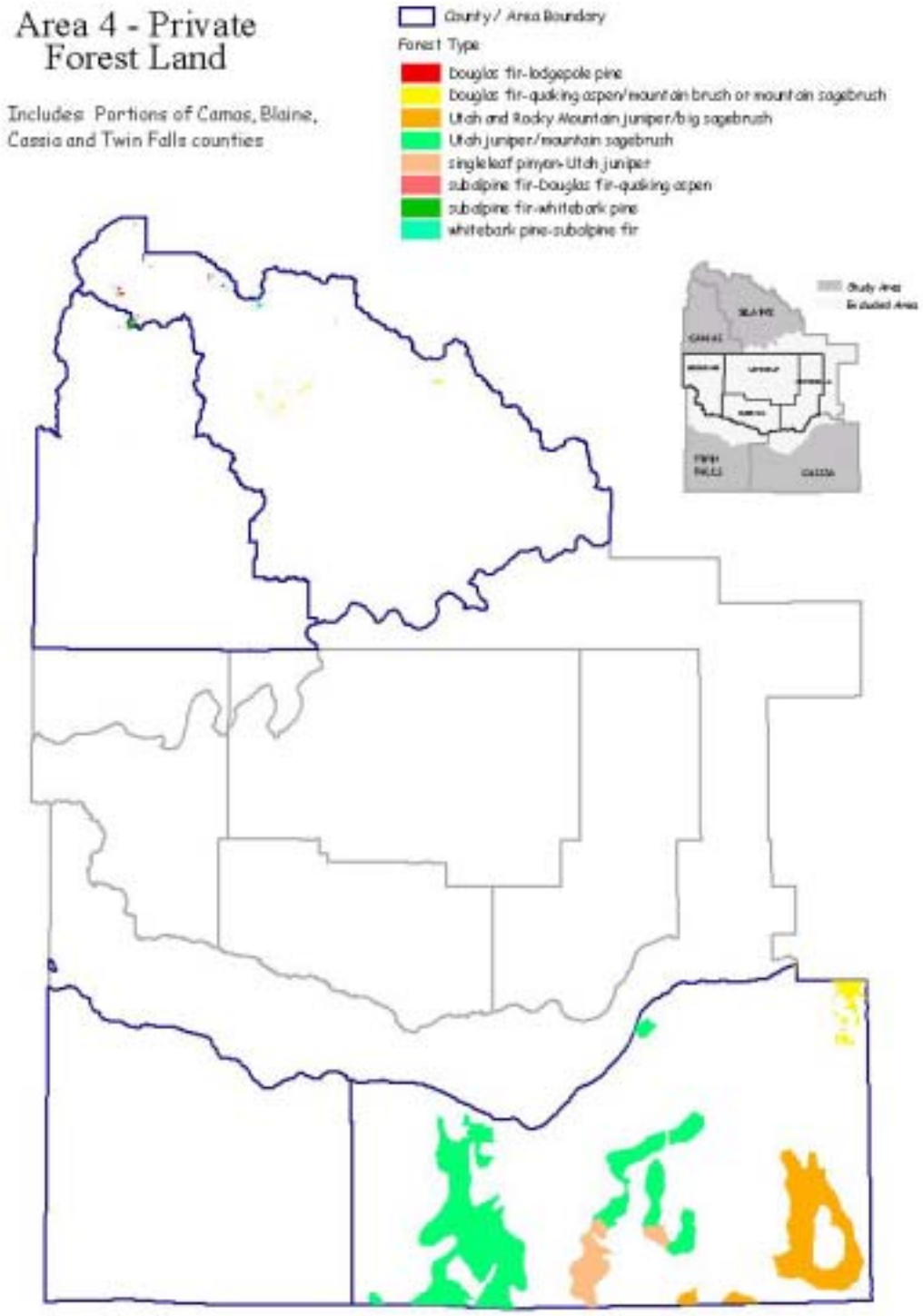


Figure 28.


Area 4 - Private Forest Land
Includes: Portions of Camas, Blaine, Cassia and Twin Falls counties
County / Area Boundary
Forest Type
Douglas fir-lodgepole pine
Douglas fir-quaking aspen/mountain brush or mountain sagebrush
Utah and Rocky Mountain juniper/big sagebrush
Utah juniper/mountain sagebrush
singleleaf pinyon-Utah juniper
subalpine fir-Douglas fir-quaking aspen
subalpine fir-whitebark pine
whitebark pine-subalpine fir
Study Area
Excluded Areas

Throughout south Idaho, one of major values to be protected and carefully managed for is big game winter range, as previously noted. In addition to the values associated with wildlife winter range, a variety of recreational opportunities exist here, ranging from mountain biking, cross country skiing and hiking near Sun Valley to big game hunting in the lands surrounding and within the southern end of the Sawtooth National Forest. The varied landscape also supports a wide variety of non-game species, including the listed and candidate species noted in Appendix III. Implementation of the Forest Legacy Program would help protect these values in the area, particularly if it is directed toward the lands where values, both environmental and economic, are the highest.

Southeast*—Mountains, lodgepole forests and flat farmlands characterize this far corner of Idaho. Historically, the Shoshone and Bannock tribes migrated through the area with the season to hunt buffalo, deer and antelope. During the westward migration on the Oregon Trail, Fort Hall became one of the trail's most famous trading posts. After the covered wagons came the Union Pacific Railroad and the settlers who irrigated and farmed the high desert lands (excerpted from Idaho's Official Travel Planner, Idaho Dept. of Commerce).*

This area of the state saw smaller gains in population compared to other Legacy areas. Areas around Pocatello and along the Bear River and Bear Lake saw significant growth over the past decade and are seeing recreational and residential developments on the private lands there.

Table 24. Change in Population, Southeast Legacy Area

	1990 Census Population	2000 Census Population	•1990-00 Population	•Percent 1990-00
Bingham	37,583	41,735	4,152	11.0%
Oneida	3,492	4,125	633	18.1%
Franklin	9,232	11,329	2,097	22.7%
Bear Lake	6,084	6,411	327	5.4%
Caribou	6,963	7,304	341	4.9%
Bannock	66,026	75,565	9,539	14.4%
Total	***129,380***	***146,469***	***17,089***	***13.2%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

There are private forested lands and they typically support stands of lodgepole and aspen, with understories of sagebrush or desert shrubs. Much of this land is important big game winter range, especially those lands that connect to irrigated farmlands at the lower elevations.

Table 25. Private Forest Ownerships, Southeast Area

	Total Lands	Total Private Lands	Private Forested Land	Percent Private Land that is Forested
Bear Lake	621,696	314,515	14,181	4.5
Bingham	1,340,672	786,156	51,387	6.5
Caribou	1,130,304	567,127	59,272	10.5
Franklin	425,920	273,366	20,489	7.5
Oneida	768,256	345,903	29,497	8.5
Power	899,648	569,484	36,221	6.4
Total	***5,186,496***	***2,856,551***	***211,047***	***7.4***

Figure 29. Land Ownership, Southeast Idaho

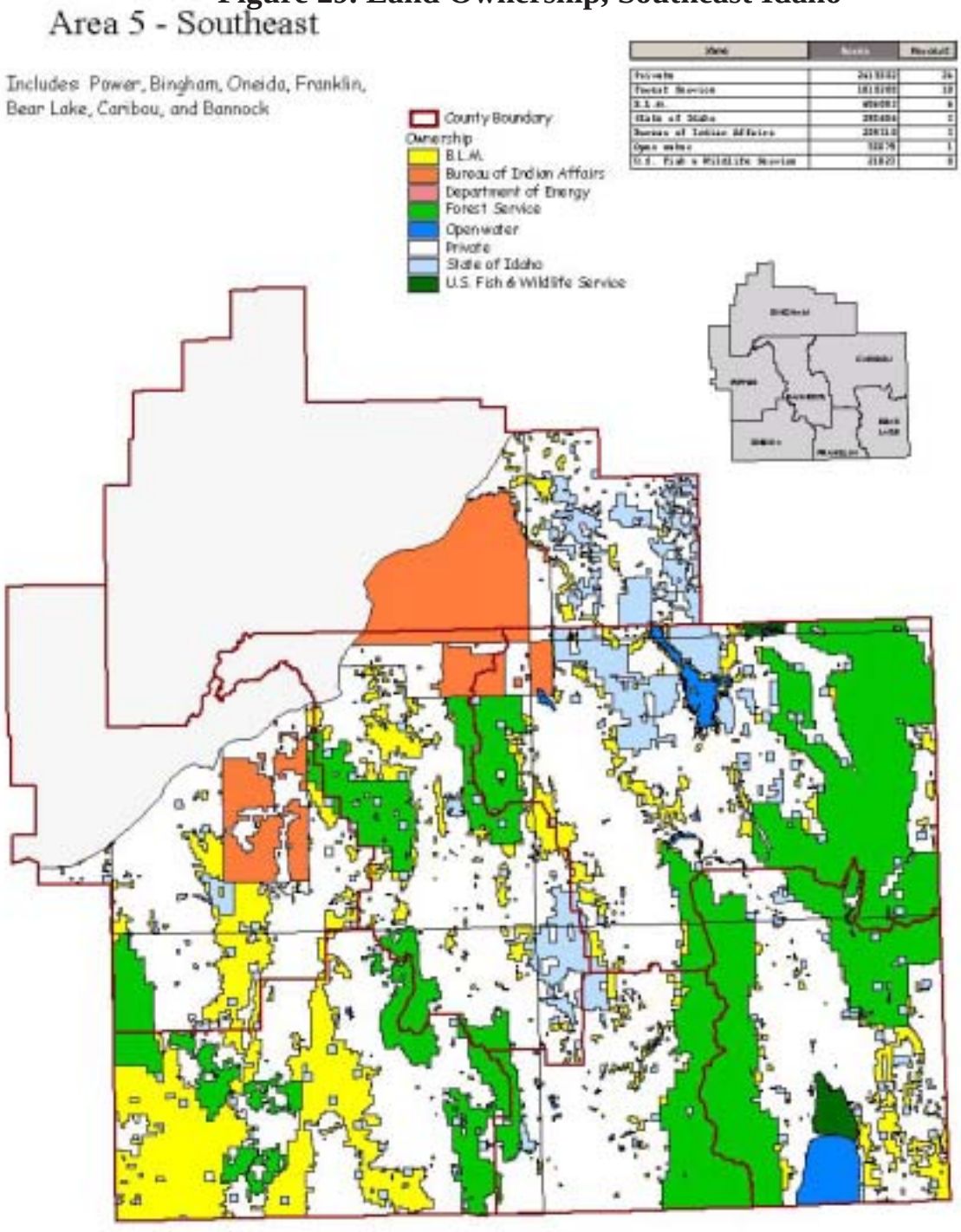
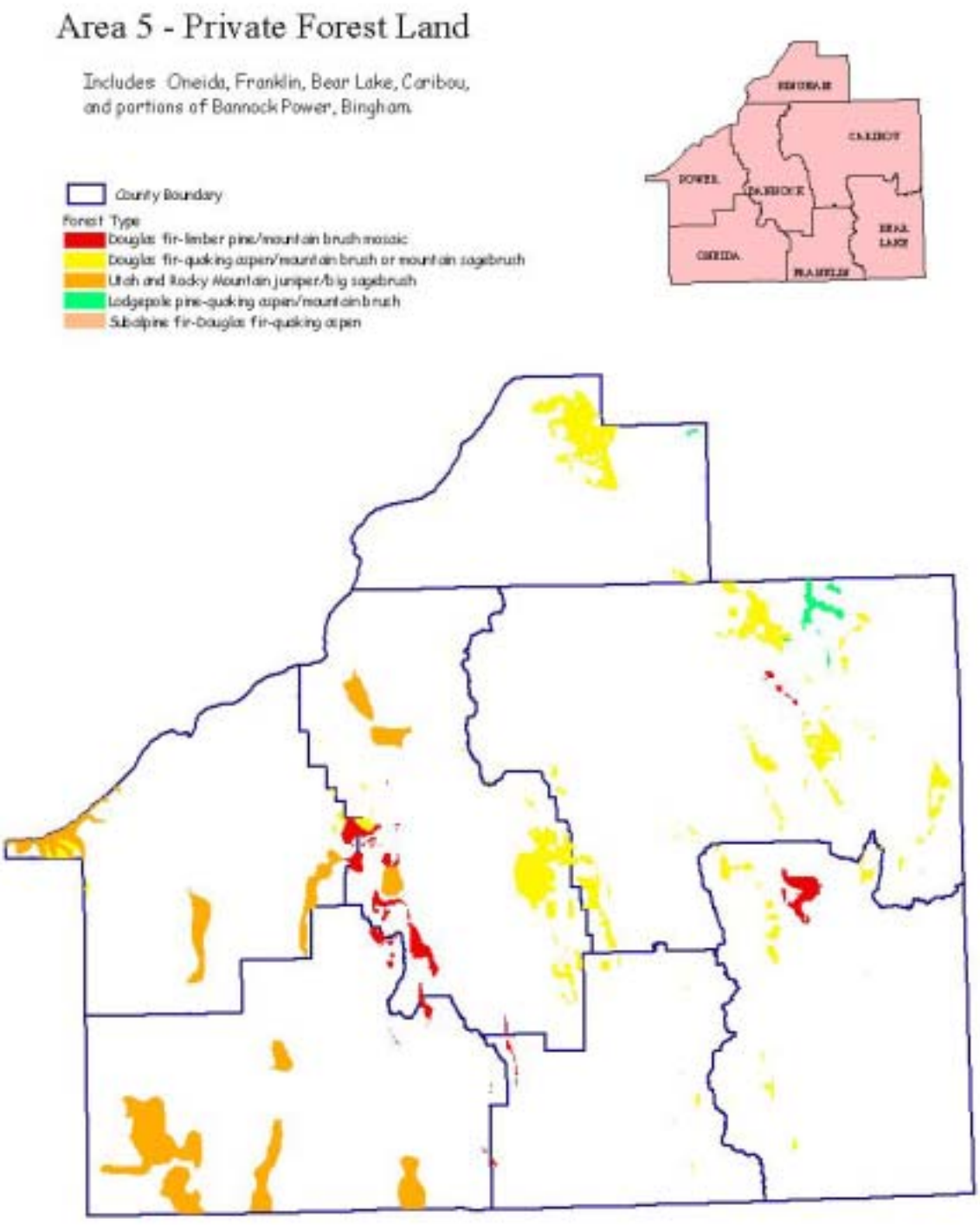


Figure 30.


Area 5 - Private Forest Land
Includes Oneida, Franklin, Bear Lake, Caribou, and portions of Bannock Power, Bingham
County Boundary
Forest Type
Douglas fir-limber pine/mountain brush mosaic
Douglas fir-quaking aspen/mountain brush or mountain sagebrush
Utah and Rocky Mountain juniper/Big sagebrush
Lodgepole pine-quaking aspen/mountain brush
Subalpine fir-Douglas fir-quaking aspen

As noted in the South Central Legacy Area, big game winter range is an important value to protect in this area, as well. In addition, there are species associated with the sagebrush steppe ecosystem that use timbered areas during certain times of the year. Sage grouse, now petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act, move into denser cover after the young hatch, particularly if those areas are reasonably close to the breeding leks. Other species of concern for which some tree cover that is associated with the sagebrush ecosystem include the Brewer's sparrow, sage sparrow and pygmy rabbit.

Given the relatively small amount of private forested land within this area and its location near transportation and river corridors, it has an increasing value for development. Its location also makes it important wildlife habitat, as well. Implementation of the Forest Legacy Program in this area would help protect wildlife habitat in key areas.

Northeast*—Mountains dominate this area, including the peaks of the Boulder, White Cloud, River, and Lemhi ranges. Nestled between the peaks there are literally thousands of creeks, alpine lakes and rivers with elk and moose grazing in the meadows. The most spectacular vistas in Idaho are found in Stanley, which lies along the Salmon River. The Stanley Basin is punctuated with cattle ranches, forests and, increasingly, guest ranches.*

Further to the east and north, is a land where the snowcapped peaks of the Grand Tetons feed glistening lakes and free flowing rivers. A neighbor to both Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, the area shares much of the spectacular beauty. Just west of Yellowstone is the Island Park area, within the center of an ancient collapsed volcano and with acres of forests and wildlife, including trumpeter swans, moose and grizzly bear. Henry's Fork of the Snake River offers world-class fly-fishing (excerpted from Idaho's Official Travel Planner, Idaho Dept. of Commerce).

The higher elevations of this area and more abundant moisture has provided enough trees that, at one time, there were a number of sawmills in the area, located in Rexburg, St. Anthony and Salmon. Now, a large tourism and recreational based economy characterizes the area, with significant growth in the communities of Driggs and Tetonia, given their proximity to Jackson. Several counties in the area have less than 5,000 people, but the percentage of growth in Teton and Clark, particularly, may indicate future trends for the area.

Table 26. Change in Population, Northeast Legacy Area

	1990 Census Population	2000 Census Population	•1990-00 Population	•Percent 1990-00
Lemhi	6,899	7,806	907	13.1%
Custer	4,133	4,342	209	5.1%
Butte	2,918	2,899	-19	-0.7%
Clark	762	1,022	260	34.1%
Fremont	10,937	11,819	882	8.1%
Madison	23,674	27,467	3,793	16.0%
Teton	3,439	5,999	2,560	74.4%
Bonneville	72,207	82,522	10,315	14.3%
Total	***124,969***	***143,876***	***18,907***	***15.1%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

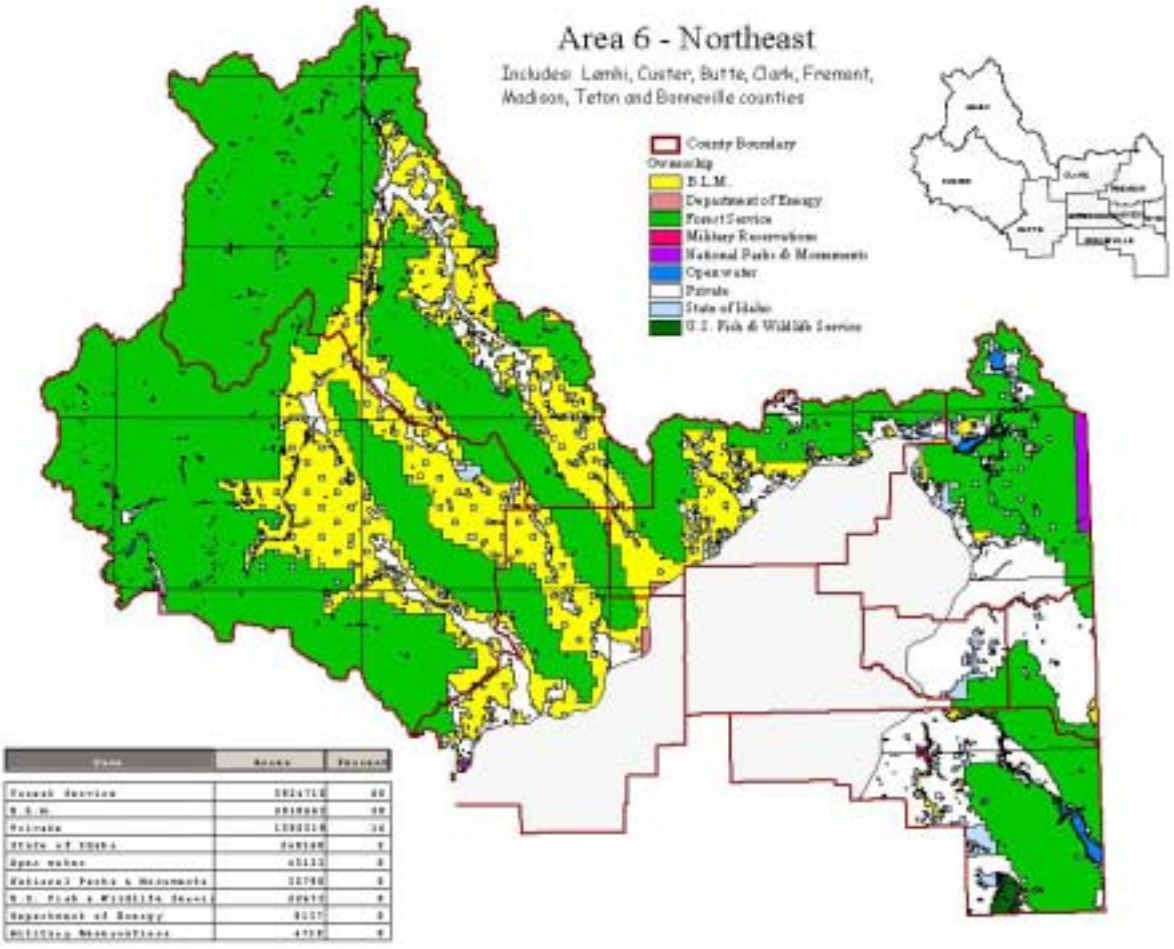
The proximity to Yellowstone, Jackson Hole and prime hunting and fishing provides some of the state's broadest and most valuable recreational opportunities. Elk and moose abound, and fly fishing in the upper Snake and Salmon Rivers is growing rapidly in popularity. In the winter, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing is popular. Consequently, rural residential and recreational developments are growing around Stanley, Island Park, Driggs and Tetonia, St. Anthony and Salmon. Growth in the recreational segment of the local economy is reflected in increased values of rural, private forestland.

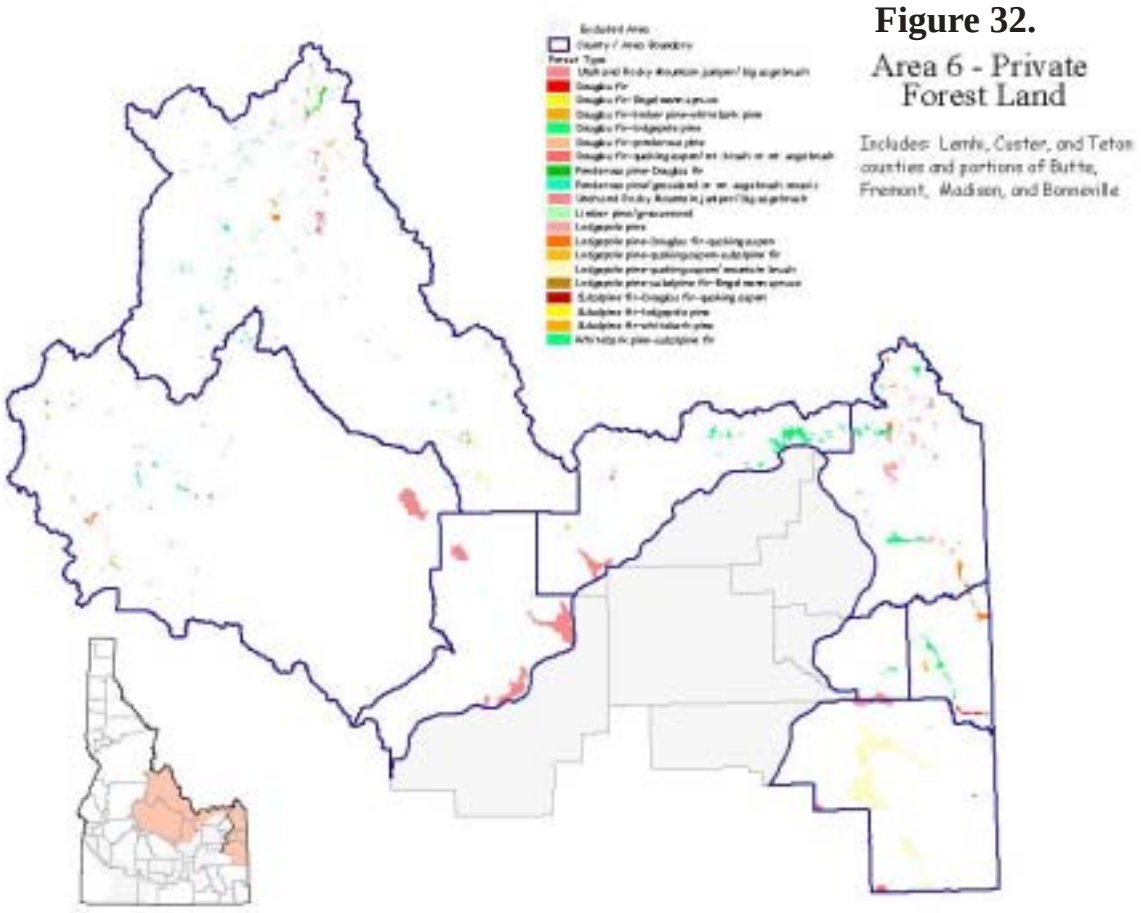
Table 27. Private Forest Ownerships, Northeast Area

	Total Lands	Total Private Lands	Private Forested Land	Percent Private Land that is Forested
Butte	1,429,056	183,511	18,286	10.0
Clark	1,129,408	300,813	13,136	4.4
Custer	3,152,384	158,503	49,469	31.2
Fremont	1,194,752	370,316	-3,469	-0.9
Lemhi	2,921,152	233,189	70,916	30.4
Madison	301,824	214,093	5,082	2.4
Teton	288,256	191,275	17,317	9.1
Total	***10,416,832***	***1,651,700***	***170,737***	***10.3***

Source: Idaho Depts. Of Commerce and Lands

Figure 31. Land Ownership, Northeast Idaho





In addition to the big game species, Appendix III summarizes listed and candidate species for the area. It is wildlife values that are perhaps most at risk from conversions of the private forested lands, particularly given the important role that these lands play in "connecting" the agricultural valleys and river bottoms with the uplands. Species unique to this area include trumpeter swans, grizzly bear and wolves, all species associated with the Yellowstone Ecosystem. As common in other parts of the states, private forestlands in this area are often a part of larger ranches and farms and generally in the lower elevations. Implementation of the Forest Legacy Program would help protect important wildlife habitat, connectivity with publicly owned uplands, as well as access to public lands for recreation.

Public Review of the Draft and Subsequent Changes

The committee, through the efforts of the Idaho Department of Lands and the Office of Species Conservation, mailed notices of the availability of the public review draft of the Forest Legacy Assessment of Need. This letter explained that the draft was available on the Department of Lands website, urged them to review it and instructed them in where and how to submit comments on the draft. In total, letters were sent to:

- 1,701 individuals and businesses,
- 50 representatives of trade associations or non-governmental organizations,
- 200 representatives of state, federal and local agencies across Idaho,
- 65 elected officials, and,
- 13 representatives of tribal governments in Idaho.

Many of the public agencies and non-governmental organizations included local entities such as soil conservation districts or resource conservation and development districts that maintain their own mailing lists, newsletters and other means to communicate with their members, and, therefore had the ability to extend information on the availability of the draft. In addition, 75 copies of the draft document were mailed, with a copy sent to each county commission in the state and others to those whom requested a copy. Finally, the availability of the draft on the IDL website was the subject of a statewide press release distributed by the Department of Lands.

From this distribution of the draft and the notice of its availability, the Office of Species Conservation received sixteen individual comments, many of which included a number of separate suggestions for improving the draft. In addition, eight commenters expressed general support for program. Each of the suggestions for changes to the draft document are summarized as follows, along with the committee's responses to them.

1. "A conservation easement can negatively affect the value of the property…I have no problem [with them] so long as the landowner is fully informed of what it means" (three similar comments received).

Response: Easements are legal instruments and encumbrances on the lands enrolled in the program. The program is based on "willing buyers and willing sellers", and does not suggest or prescribe additional regulations, either on lands not enrolled in the program or apart from those negotiated and agreed upon as part of the easement. The final Assessment strengthens the language that describes conservation easements on page 45.

2. "Could you give tax rebates for those who wish to improve forest management?"

Response: Idaho's forestland tax laws allow property taxes based on forest productivity rather than "highest and best use". This treatment provides for lower taxes on forestlands. Also, Idaho law provides a tax credit for land management activities carried out as part of certain efforts to protect water quality, fish or wildlife habitat. Further tax incentives are not within the purview of the Forest Legacy Program.

3. "Our biggest concern is the use of forest lands for timber harvesting… and this historic use should be protected."

Response: The committee agrees and this objective is clearly included in the "Assessment of Need".

4. "Our concern is funding for the program…will [it] carry so many requirements that it will be hard to maintain historic uses of forestlands?" (Three similar comments received)

Response: Congress will make funding decisions each year, and, as such, there can be no commitments for future funding levels. Congress could also change the qualifications for Forest Legacy projects. Each landowner contemplating enrolling his or her lands in the program will have to judge whether the encumbrances placed on it or the requirements of the program at that time are acceptable to him.

5. "Who will oversee the forest stewardship program." "How will it be administered?" (Three similar comments received).

Response: Current law places administration of the Forest Legacy Program with the Idaho Department of Lands and specifies the makeup of the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee. This will be made clearer in the final "Assessment of Need" on page 46.

6. "The description and activities of the Idaho Soil Conservation Districts is not correct"

Response: The current description is rewritten in the final version on page 42.

7. "The Forest Legacy Program can help Idaho meet the TMDL requirements. This point needs to be stronger in the report."

Response: Inasmuch as the lands enrolled in the program will still likely be managed as they have been historically, inclusion of the lands per se would not seem to have as much of an impact on improving water quality as the management practices employed on them. There could be additional, unfavorable impacts to water quality if the lands in question were managed for uses other than historic ones.

8. "The Forest Legacy Program should address the habitat requirements of sensitive species"

Response: One criterion for judging individual Legacy proposals is "contribution to environmental and cultural values", including habitats for all fish and wildlife species. The committee believes the potential for protecting the habitat of sensitive species should be a factor to be considered in evaluating individual proposals and has included this in the criteria for evaluating project proposals on page 53.

9. "We suggest revisiting the priority scoring system…by including a measure of species richness and aquatic integrity to number of threatened and endangered species"

Response: The priority scoring system applies only to the six legacy areas. It is anticipated that the committee will adopt additional criteria to evaluate individual legacy project proposals and "species richness" or "aquatic integrity" of the surrounding area could certainly be among them. A secondary, but related issue to be addressed by the Committee is whether higher scores for these criteria should be given to an individual project that would be helpful in maintaining that score or should funds be directed toward projects where scores are low and implementation of Legacy projects might, over time, improve them. As described on page 54, the Committee will need to make further decisions regarding program implementation.

10. "Lands with Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel should be excellent candidates…funding should make the development of habitat conservation plans and safe harbor agreements more attractive to landowners."

Response: Although adoption of final criteria for evaluating individual project proposals is up to the Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee, it would seem that any project that would preserve habitat for a listed species would certainly be attractive, as would the landowner's participation in a conservation plan for those species.

11. "…The [State Forest Stewardship Coordinating] committee should include biologists, botanists and ecologists…"

Response: The required makeup of the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee is specified in federal statute. The Department of Lands could presumably include "ad hoc" members to gain additional, useful perspectives and knowledge as described on page 46.

12. "Efforts should include a brochure distributed to the public describing the program and potential benefits"

Response: The State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee will take this under consideration as it develops procedures to implement the program and includes this as part of the future work of the Committee, as described on page 54.

13. "Timber harvesting practices on lands in the Forest Legacy Program should be governed by more protective measures than the Idaho Forest Practices Act….non-timber benefits should be protected in the easement agreements."

Response: The specific provisions of each easement will represent a negotiated agreement between the state and the landowner. Provisions that maximize the protection of all forest values will be more valuable than an easement that offers only partial protection for these values.

14. "The Assessment guidelines need to address how noxious weeds are going to be monitored, prevented and controlled on private lands."

Response: The national guidance for the program is silent on the matter of noxious weeds. Hence, there is no reference to them in Idaho's Assessment. Individual project proposals and easement requirements could address this problem, however.

15. "Idaho's Forest Legacy Program needs to describe how the state will assess compliance with Legacy agreements."

Response: As the program is implemented, it will be incumbent upon the Department of Lands to develop careful compliance procedures. The Department has the statutory responsibility for assuring compliance with the provisions of each easement. This is described on page 45.

16. "The Forest Legacy Program's purpose should be included in the document's introduction"

Response: This suggestion was incorporated on page 1.

17. "The aquatic integrity map needs a better legend"

Response: The aquatic integrity map is based on a number of complex measures that are fully described in the pages immediately preceding the map.

18. "Table 11 implies that unemployment and poverty levels are tied to the timber industry…we experienced a major layoff in the mining sector"

Response: The narrative discussion will make clear that unemployment and poverty levels are not solely tied to changes in the forest products industry. Such changes were added to page 36.

19. "Figure 1 lists Forest and Woodland Types that are eligible for the Legacy Program."

Response: Basic eligibility in the program is a function of private forest ownership and forest vegetation on that land. Figure 1 and the accompanying maps for each Legacy Area that show forest vegetation illustrate one part of the basic eligibility criteria—forest vegetation.

20. "The liberal interpretation used to get the acreage of forested land is, at best, overstated…the Department of Lands shows a lower amount of land that qualifies for forest protection dollars in the county"

Response: The committee encountered a number of discrepancies in the amount of private, forested lands for each county among various sources. This appears to be the result in differing definitions of "forests" and sources of data. The amount of these lands for each county used in the assessment was from the Forest Service's 1991 survey of Idaho's forestlands.

21. "I urge you to include easements for recreation access to public lands as an additional qualifier for the Forest Legacy Program."

Response: Please note the response to #13.

22. "It is necessary that county officials be involved in the decisions on what development rights are purchased in each county."

Response: It would appear that the sale of development rights or other private property rights is a matter to be decided by the individual landowner. Counties may, of course, restrict those transfers through zoning or other ordinances and some counties may wish to do that with respect to the Forest Legacy Program. The committee urges the Department of Lands to continue to include county elected officials in the implementation of the Program and their potential involvement with the Committee is described on page 46.

23. "Will the tax status be negatively impacted?"

Response: Since the lands enrolled in the Legacy Program will be managed as they have been historically, there should be no reduction in taxes paid on them. However, if they were developed, the tax status would obviously change with higher taxes likely being levied on the same lands.

24. "The term 'traditional forest uses' needs to allow for multiple uses and activities designed to protect the health of the forest."

Response: Please note the response to #13.

25. "Who determines the value of the development rights and is that value based on local markets?"

Response: Federal approved appraisers and appraisal methods must be employed for all Forest Legacy projects.

26. "Will funding be funding be distributed equally to each Legacy Area?"

Response: The committee envisions that each Legacy project proposal will be evaluated against all others with the priority of the Legacy area being one evaluation criteria. Hence, there will be no allocation of funds for an individual Legacy area, per se.

27. "Who defines "near-term threats of conversion."

Response: The development of this and other project evaluation criteria will be the responsibility of the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee, as described on page 54.

28. "Would an expansion of an existing timber-related use be allowed or could you only maintain the existing level of forest use?"

Response: Please note the response to #13.

29. "Recent fires have demonstrated the susceptibility of wilderness areas…this issue should be addressed…[timber] harvests on federal lands has plummeted…stabilization of federal timber harvests would appear to be a more than promoting a decreased harvest on non-federal land"

Response: There is no relationship between the Forest Legacy Program and the management of the national forests.

30. "Care should be taken that easements intended to preserve forested lands do no divert development to productive agricultural property."

Response: There would appear to be nothing inherent in the Forest Legacy Program that would direct development from one land class to another. There are similar programs that seek to preserve agricultural lands through conservation easements.

31. "The program must be completely voluntary with no governmental pressure on the landowner"

Response: The committee agrees and each landowner who seeks enrollment in the program must assess his or her reasons for doing so. There are no regulations on land use or management imposed on lands not enrolled in the program and there is no eminent domain or adverse condemnation authorized by the program.

32. "The program must protect the timber production capability of these lands."

Response: This is clearly one of the program's objectives for Idaho.

33. "The program must not lead to new regulations or added costs for landowners."

Response: Please note the response to #13.

34. "The final program should draw heavily on the private sector as part of the governing committee."

Response: Please note the response to #11.

35. "A public education piece detailing examples of program results in other state and the potential money available would be helpful."

Response: Please note the response to #12.

36. "Should the public participation process be included in the Assessment of Need?"

Response: The process for public review of the draft Assessment, the comments received and the responses to them are included in the final document.

37. "Should there be a table identifying which organizations in Idaho are capable of holding conservation easements?"

Response: When a state elects the "state grant option", all future easement acquisitions made under the Forest Legacy Program shall be transacted by the state with title vested in the state or a unit of state or local government. There are three exceptions: (1) Active cases predating the state grant option request, where all parties agree that the case should be competed by the Forest Service and title vested in the U.S.; (2) Donations where the donor may wish to make a donation to a land trust, a unit of local government or the federal government and the recipient agrees to accept the donation and to manage the lands or interest in lands in perpetuity for Forest Legacy purposes; and (3) At the request of the State and at the discretion of the Forest Service, that agency may acquire individual tracts or multiple tracts within a specified forest legacy area, with title vested in the U.S. in accordance with Part 3 of the Forest Legacy Program Implementation Guidelines. Given these requirements of the program, there is no simple and all-inclusive list of organizations capable of holding conservation easements as part of the Forest Legacy Program, although a number of organizations can certainly do so under other provisions of state or federal law.

38. "The forest industry should have a representative on the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee."

Response: Please note the response to #11. In addition, there currently are representatives of the forest products industry on Idaho's State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee.

39. "Forest products companies should be informed of deadlines for project proposals."

Response: That addition has been made in the final document on page 54.

40. "Are forest product companies eligible to participate in the program?"

Response: All private forest landowners, including forest products companies, with lands in the approved Forest Legacy areas are eligible for the Program. The narrative of the final document makes that clear on page 49.

41. "Should the eligibility criteria include additional points if the proposal is mentioned as an "important forest area" in other plans?"

Response: Please note the response to #27.

42. "A list of the 23 T&E species should be included."

Response: Appendix III includes the list of these species, together with their occurrence in each county.

Sources

Idaho Department of Labor, www.labor.state.id.us, “Labor Market Information”

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